

THE LONDON READER

An Illustrated Family Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, Domestic and General Information.

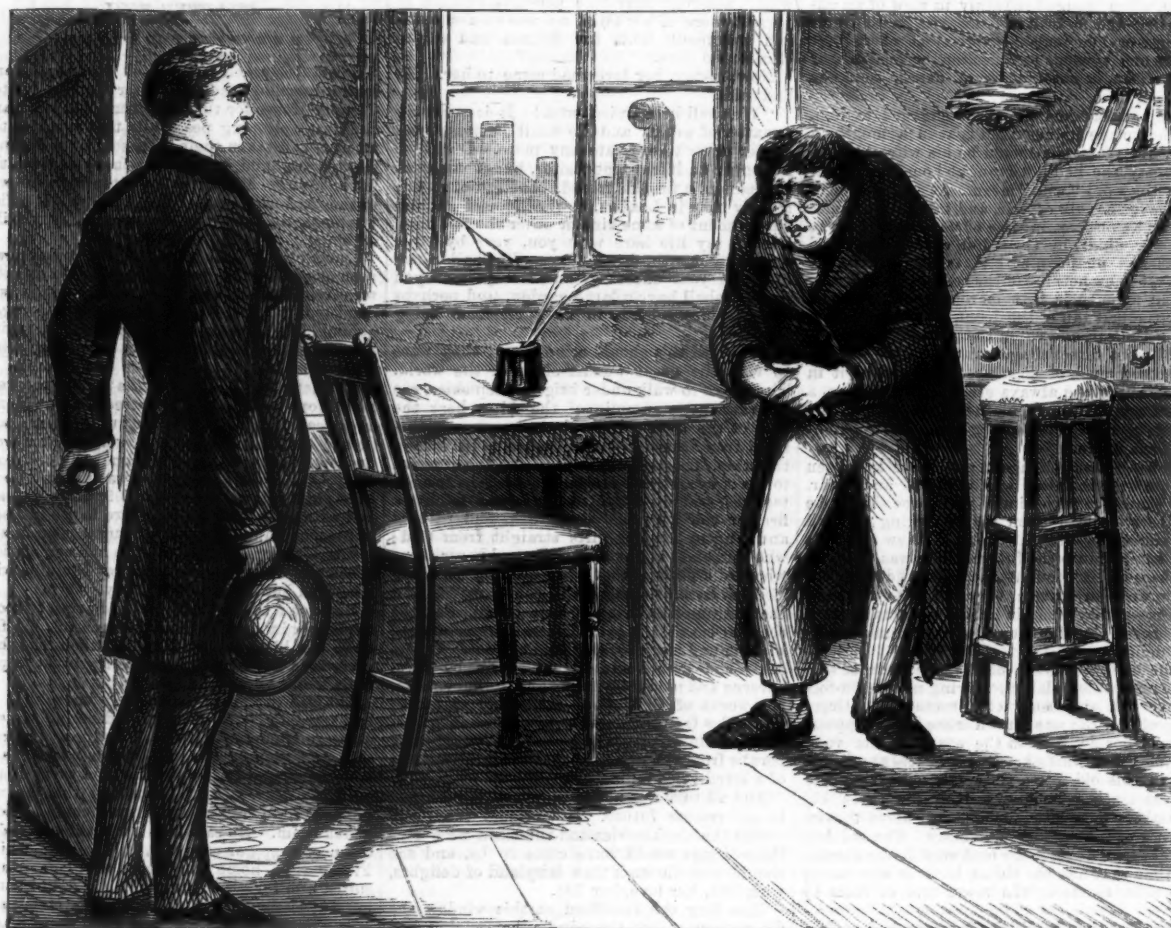
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[MANTON ENTERED, AND WAS COURTEOUSLY MOTIONED TO A CHAIR BY THE DWARF.]

SWEET INISFAIL.

A ROMANCE.

By RICHARD DOWLING,

AUTHOR OF

"The Mystery of Killard," "The Weird Sisters,"
"The Duke's Sweetheart," "A Sapphire Ring," etc.

PART I.—INHERITANCE.

CHAPTER XVI.

A VIGIL.

WHEN the two young men left the West Gate that night, Mr. Fail declared to his daughter that he would smoke another pipe be-

fore retiring. Upon this she kissed him, bade him good night, and, taking a candle off the hall table, went upstairs.

Her bedroom was at the back of the house, looking towards the west.

She did not, however, go beyond the first floor in the main building, but turned to the left, entered the passage leading to the chambers over the old Gate, and ascended to the topmost.

In the faint light of the candle the delicate form and face of the slender, lithe girl appeared in powerful contrast to the massive adamantine walls of the old fortification, which had stood unaltered through centuries of change, had resisted the blows of Cromwell's shot, and defied the ravages of slower, but more deadly, Time.

When the girl found herself within the highest chamber, she set the candle down on the table, and, going to the window looking

east, stretched her head and shoulders into its deep embrasure and looked out.

The broad street below was absolutely deserted. Neither man nor beast was to be seen. The infrequent lamps burned brightly in the soft air which yet had in the night-time hours of impenetrable darkness, for May was young.

Agnes leaned forward, resting her face upon her hands. From the street below nothing could be seen in the eastern window of the Gate but the outline made by the light escaping into the darkness around the figure of the musing girl.

Her mind was too full of tremulous delight for sleep. She was too happy for consecutive thought, distinct ideas. The pleasure of mere existence in the atmosphere of such love as her's seemed to satisfy all desires, to quell all ambitions, to set aside all sorrow.

He had but just gone forth—her joyous, valiant, handsome, careful, thoughtful, tender

lover. The ideas these words express, and the qualities essential to these ideas, were not vividly represented in her mind as individual ideas or qualities, but the words, or, more accurately, the feelings which the words arouse in an emotional heart, rather than in the judicial mind, came to her in succession, as pulses quickened by pleasures which cannot be analyzed. If she had wanted to urge her own joy upon her by forming words on her lips, or in her heart, she need have had recourse to none but two. She had only to whisper with her lips, or say in the eloquent sacredness of her virgin soul, the words, "My love!" To these words she could add nothing; from them she could take nothing away. They were not words in themselves, to her, of any distinct meaning. As the first impulse, when brought suddenly in view of an unexpected and beautiful landscape, is to silent rapture or inarticulate expressions of delight before one descends to reflection, or analysis, or comparison, or observation of detail, so it was with her now.

She had for some time been engaged to him. She had made up her mind that in a month, a year, five years, she should be his wife; but until to-day she had not brought home to herself what the word "wife" meant. As young soldiers may love the talk of war, and talk of little else among themselves in time of peace, and seek to fill their minds, by the aid of conversation and books and pictures, with ideas of what war is like, yet know nothing of the real thing until they set out upon their first march against the foe, hear the first tap of the drum, which the enemy, too, may hear, and catch the sound of the first, far-off shot directed against their lines—so she had heard much of marriage, and read of it in books, but it had always seemed to her like a far-off country she should never behold, or like a gone-by time which never could take substantial form again.

Now all was changed, and what had been remote and shadowy was intimate and clear. She should be with him all day; she should be at liberty to lean upon his protecting arm all the times they walked together. New elements had entered into the future. She was not only to share all his thoughts, hopes, confidences, but they were to travel; they were to see new places—places which in her day-dreams haunted her as regions of perfume, song and never-ending delight.

She had the power of idealism, born of solitude and contemplation. Having no woman-folk of her kin, and being of a mute and retiring disposition, she was known more by the appearance of her figure than the sound of her voice among the townfolk. She had spent all her life in this old West Gate House, having had access since her childhood to the three old chambers over the town gate. Here the influence of the past was dominant. The builders of that gate dwelt so far backward in the shadow of time that not the oldest book in any one of the three rooms of the tower told of them by name.

The last time in which Clonmore had made a figure in martial history was when Cromwell and Ireton were abroad. And although that was a period vividly remembered in the general history of Ireland, and has continued life in the popular sayings of the country, the deeds then recorded, the atrocities then committed, the brutal excesses which then prevailed, are so horrible and unlike the warfare of later times, that the imagination of the young girl drove the circumstances and events of that historical period centuries back, until they assumed the form of dire myths, incredible fables.

Here, too, in these three rooms, where she loved best to sit, when not abroad, by the lonely siver, in the unweaved plain, or under the potent silence of the hills, she mused or read the whole day through, having no contact with the living world of the hour but the brief period of meal-time, when she met her father, who as long as she could recall was a man of memories, one who loved to speak rather of the past than of the present.

Not only was the present dulled by the historic influence of the Gate Tower, and of the old

fantastic books, but the thick walls muffled the sounds of the outer world and made the things of which they were born seem faint and far away, and owing to the same cause it was impossible, while sitting in any one of the rooms in an ordinary attitude, to see more than the tops of the houses.

All these circumstances, and the fact that for years Agnes had not been in robust health, made the real, everyday world take shape scarcely stronger in line or colour than the lines and colours in the chronicles and histories and poems on the dusty shelves of the tower rooms.

Now what change had come? With the advent of her lover, a few years ago, the future, which she had hitherto neglected, became peopled and furnished with shapes and affairs, which, although they bore personal relation to herself, were in her mind no more substantial and imminent than the figures and affairs of recorded time.

Now, to-day, her lover had come to her. He had said:

"We shall be married soon! It is now only a matter of weeks, and we shall be joined together never to separate any more. I will be no longer an infrequent visitor, but a constant companion, a fireside friend. Instead of spending my time in London, in the hope of getting employment of some kind or other there, I shall live all my life here with you, year by year, month by month, day by day. We shall take a house of your choosing, and live just as you like. I shall have a large garden, and perhaps a little bit of land, to keep me from being idle."

Before all this should come about, they were to visit the great wonder-cities of the world. They were to walk under bright, deep skies, see the vast snowy summits of the Alps, hear the rush of the avalanche, and the crash reverberated from frozen peak to frozen peak among the stars. They should walk among the crowded towns of swarthy men, who jabbered in foreign tongues, and never knew what it was to have a fire for the purposes of warmth, and painted and sang by force of gifts straight from God; who sold and bought things she had never seen; who had a climate that was paradise, and passions as dark as the central gloom of earth. And then, strangest and most dear of all, was the thought that all this should be while she touched his arm and could look up into his face. Cathedrals and domes and pillars built by man, caverns and mountain peaks and solitary rocks, the works of God, were noble and elevating spectacles for the human eye, but what nameless, subtle beauty and grandeur would they borrow from the presence of love and the sound of a loved voice telling of them?

And all this was to be at any vague time, in any remote future. It was now May, and before the blackberries and the haws were ripe these things would have come to be, and she should walk through that fairland of delights, with him, her love, her life.

How long she remained at this window she did not know, but the candle behind her had ceased to rim her figure with light. The sky, towards which her face was turned, had grown silver-blue with light before she awoke to a sense of present things. Even at this time of the year she did not often see daylight in.

Her first thought on perceiving the lateness of the hour, was:

"I shall be tired to-morrow when he comes." She raised her head and looked into the street. The lamps were still burning, although she could now distinctly see the Main Guard at the other end. The place was no longer deserted. The solitary figure of a man was coming westward, in the middle of the road.

"If it should be he," she whispered to herself, "I will go down and say good morning to him. He will be surprised to see me waking. What a strange thing it would be if he and I should have kept awake all this night, and he should come here and find me waking this morning."

She leaned forward and waited eagerly. The figure of the man continued to approach, but he was so far below her, and the light was yet so

faint in the street that she could not be sure it was he.

The dawn played full upon her face, and she could be plainly seen from the street below, for the dark colour of the old wall and of the window against which her face was set left that face the only illuminable spot of the old tower.

When the man was a hundred yards nearer, he stopped, looked up. He evidently recognized her at once, for he took off his hat, drew back his head that she might see his face more plainly, and bowed.

She drew hastily back from the window. The man walking abroad between four and five o'clock in the morning was George Manton.

CHAPTER XVII.

HER FIRST LETTER.

WHILE George Manton took that stroll early in the morning, the day after he had visited Glenary House for the first time, his wife and child were sleeping peacefully together, for the mother had taken their little son into her bed for company and solace. At the same time, the letter George Manton had written his wife was in the Post-office van of the Irish mail, which was flying to London at the rate of forty miles an hour.

During their whole married life they had never been separated so long before, and the little wife felt forlorn and dejected, although she admitted the necessity there was for George's holiday, and the advisability of his not taking her with him. Yet there was in her warm, impulsive nature, a sense of loss and trouble, of incompleteness and sadness, as though the well-known opposite side of the street had suddenly disappeared, disclosing an unfamiliar and dreary breadth. She woke now and then from uneasy dreams, in which she knew he had gone away. On such awakenings she was instantly conscious of the fact that he had left home, but she had an uneasy, insatiable desire to see her boy, and touch him, for by some unreasoning and mysterious development of love and association, she could not believe that her boy could be with her when her husband was away.

She took the boy softly in her arms, without arousing him, and kissed his forehead, his fair hair, his blooming cheek, and when she had performed this secret rite she lay back, wept a little while, and dozed again.

She had got his telegram, and knew that he had arrived safely. He had told her he was not going to Ireland solely for the purpose of recreation or pleasure. He had broken bad news to her gently and tenderly. He said their affairs were in a desperate condition, and that he was going over to Ireland to see what could be done about them. He said that by a singular coincidence, happy or unhappy, he knew not which, Fitzgerald's home was just the place which suited him for his business. He had not much hope at leaving that he could bring matters to a successful issue. He told her there was a likelihood—ay, and a strong likelihood, too—that their cosy little home might soon be sold up, that he might be unable to retain his situation, and that, in fact, his flight even might be necessary! She had asked him why flight? and he had said the story was too long to tell now, but that once upon a time he had been the innocent accomplice in certain matters of which the law might take notice; that he had fled then, and had never spoken to mortal of the thing since; and that he might be compelled to fly again if the business which took him to Ireland could not be arranged in a particular way. He had then gone into figures and minute facts. He had tried to reassure, and he had told her that, come what might, he would take her and the boy with him if events compelled him to leave the country.

This last promise was all in all to her.

What was the loss of these tables and chairs to her, if she might be with him? She cared not whether or when she went, if only they three might be together. It might be France, or Germany, or Australia, or Iceland, for all the

difference it made to her. Outside that little home—and walls and furniture did not make what she considered home, but the people whom these walls and furniture protected and served—she had no love to forego, no part of her heart or affections to leave behind. With her husband and her boy, she was prepared to face any place, any thing. Hardships, privation, solitude, had no terrors for her. The only thing which could appal her and break her down, would be separation, and that, he had sworn to her, should not occur. Hence it was that she was able to part from him without any great sign of unpleasant emotion, and that the present severance was harder for her to bear than the anticipation of any prospective unpleasantness or disasters.

He had given her some money and told her that within the month he should be away things must come to a crisis, but that it would take some time more than the month before that crisis could operate finally on him. The money he left her was a good deal more than sufficient for the ordinary monthly expenses. She was to keep the money constantly by her, and if he wrote or telegraphed she was to leave the home in charge of the servant, taking with her only the boy and such personal luggage as they both should require for a month. In the telegram or letter, he would tell her the place she was to start for, and the manner in which she was to get there.

She expected a letter at noon that day, and did not go out until after the delivery of the Irish mail.

When the post at last came she ran upstairs with the letter, and, taking her boy on one knee and placing the unopened envelope on the other, she pointed it out to the child and told him that it was from his father, who was far, far away, and that there were in it kisses for Freddy and mamma. She left the letter still on her knee and spoke to the boy of his absent father, recalling his playful ways with the child, and the monstrous stories which he invented for Freddy's delight. Talking thus to their son seemed to lessen the distance between them and him, and after the suspense as to whether she should get a letter or not, for no matter how certain we may be in our reason that a letter is coming from one we love, the heart is never satisfied until the dearly desired and familiar writing is before our eyes on the cover.

However much one may desire to know the matter contained in a sweetheart's letter, whether that sweetheart has yet spoken the words at the altar or is only waiting to speak them, the heart is more satisfied with the fact that the loved one's handwriting is again addressed to one's self, than by the knowledge of even important things spoken of in the letter itself.

At last Mrs. Manton broke the envelope and read.

Her face betrayed a little disappointment as she put down the sheet. There were no kisses on it for her or the boy.

"Shew me where the kisses are, mamma," said Freddy.

"Here they are!" cried the mother, taking the boy in her arms and kissing him passionately, without referring to the letter.

No husband could write a more tender or affectionate letter than the one she had just received; and while she had not in her nature the least trace of jealousy, she wondered George, in this his serious trouble, could think of writing at such length and with such enthusiasm about Agnes Fair.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MANTON LEAVES CLONMORE.

FROM the way in which George Manton behaved on the occasion of his brother's fraud at the telegraph office years ago, no one could suspect him of being a man of strong moral fibre. When traditions or affections overcome the impulses of straightforward action, there is always

weakness if not vice. George Manton was one of those easy-going, ease-loving, kindly men who would never, in all their lives, do an unjust or a cruel action except tempted to it by the exercise of some affection or tradition great enough to swallow up all other considerations. Such natures are much more common than we might at first suppose, for we must remember, if we do not see errors and crimes belonging to this class committed frequently, it is because temptations of the sort are few. In most families fraud is, happily, a thing unknown, and in most cases of fraud which come before the public, it happens that they are committed by men isolated from family affections, or so situated that family affections could have little power to shield them.

If George Manton and his brother were on an open plain, his brother having committed some crime, he himself being innocent, and the officers of justice were in pursuit, with authority to fire in case the fugitives did not stop, George Manton would have kept on his way and taken his chance of being shot rather than turn round and betray his brother.

On the morning Manton took that early walk he did not return to the hotel till breakfast time. He had not been in bed the night before. When Fitzgerald left him, he went out once more and walked about the roads and streets of the town all night. When he met Fitzgerald at breakfast, he went to him and said:

"You must try and forgive me for last night. I have been cruelly tortured."

"I'll forgive you," said Fitzgerald, "on the condition mentioned last night. Let us shake hands upon it."

The two friends fronted each other, looking into each other's eyes. Their looks said, "It is all over now. Let us say no more about it."

Fitzgerald saw that Manton was worn and weary-looking, but accounted for this by supposing that he had had merely a restless night.

The two sat down to breakfast. There was nothing very striking to talk about. At last, Manton said:

"The things that have been threatening me are in Dublin. I don't know exactly where, but I can find out the address. I am thinking of leaving by the afternoon train and getting them into my possession. I have a good deal more money than I shall want for that purpose, and I shall be out of pain if I can once get hold of them and burn them."

"I do not wish you," said Fitzgerald, "to tell me anything you would rather keep to yourself, but if you care to answer me you may. Are these things bills?"

"Yes."

"There are two names on them, of course," said Fitzgerald.

"There are two names on them," answered the other, "George Manton's is across the faces, Frederick Manton's is at the feet and across the backs."

"He drew upon you?"

Manton nodded.

"Frederick Manton is your father, after whom you have called your boy?"

"Frederick Manton was my father's name, and after him I called my boy. But Frederick Manton's name on the bills is not in the handwriting of my father. Ask me no more about this matter."

When breakfast was over, Fitzgerald said he had to go and see Flynn on business, and left Manton alone. The latter sat down and wrote a long letter to his wife, telling her that Fitzgerald had insisted upon his taking the loan of money, more than sufficient to extricate them from their difficulties, and that he was that afternoon about to leave Clonmore for Dublin, where he would remain a day or two before returning to Clonmore. He drove to the railway station half an hour before the train was due. Carrying his portmanteau in his hand, he entered the telegraph office.

Edward Pryce was in the act of dispatching a message when he saw Manton enter. He paused a moment, and looking at the bag, said, in a tone of surprise:

"Going back to London so soon?"

"No," said Manton, "I'm going only to Dublin. I want you to give me that address."

"Oh!" said Pryce; "are you going to see after those things?"

"Yes," answered Manton.

"I'm glad of that," said the other, as he wrote a line on a slip of paper.

Manton took the slip and read aloud:

"Mr. Isaacs, Rook Street, Dublin." Is that right?"

"Quite right. You will find him most obliging. He has always been civility itself to me."

Manton frowned heavily.

"He has been a great deal too civil to you."

Pryce laughed harshly, and said:

"That is scarcely generous, when we consider how useful he has been to us."

"Us, indeed!" said Manton, bitterly. "He has almost ruined me. However, let us drop the subject now. Let us say no more about it ever again."

"As you please," said the other. "You must be a rich man now, to do all this."

"A rich man!" cried Manton, scornfully. "I have escaped ruin by a miracle."

Pryce laughed once more, and said:

"I know one thing. The miracle is good enough to be worth fifty now to me!"

"You have neither a heart nor conscience," said Manton, bitterly, and, without making further reply, he left the office.

When he had done so, Pryce went to the instrument, called Dublin, and sent off a message, addressed to Joseph Isaacs, Rook Street. It ran as follows:

"Pryce, Clonmore: Isaacs, Rook Street, Dublin.—Straight tip. If anyone wants to settle, don't give up for less than a hundred bonus."

As Pryce finished the message the train for Dublin steamed out of the station with George Manton as a passenger.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOSEPH ISAACS, MONEY-LENDER.

THAT night Manton arrived in Dublin, too late to think of calling on any man of business. But about eleven o'clock next day he set out for Rook Street. He was driven to a narrow, dingy, forbidding-looking street, leading from Dame Street to the Quay. Here, in a small back office, with one narrow, high window, two Windsor chairs, one leather-covered table, on which were writing materials and a small safe standing on a stout wooden stand, sat a pale, dark-visaged, black-haired, parchment-skinned man of forty, with a very large, hooked nose and heavy, thick lips, the lower one of which turned outwards and had a cleft in the middle. The man was no more than four feet six in height. Almost immediately under his chin there was a sharp projection, equal in size to a man's fist. On the back, just at the shoulder-blades, was a much larger projection. The man was a hunch-back and a dwarf. His name was Joseph Isaacs. He lived by discounting bills which no other man in the city would touch, which generally had a history beyond the promise to pay on the stamp, and upon which he charged the highest rates of usury. Nothing came amiss to him. Though he knew this man or that man's signature as well as his own, and a bill were presented to him purporting to bear the signature of this or that man, but which no more resembled the writing of the supposed signer than that of Shakespeare or King John, supposing he knew the man who brought it to be capable of raising the amount in any way later on, he would simply have increased the discount by twenty per cent., cashed the bill, and taken no further notice of the forgery.

A lad brought in Manton's card from the outer to the inner office. Word came out that Mr. Isaacs would see Mr. Manton in a few minutes. After a while, two knocks were heard from within, and the boy said:

"Will you walk in now, sir?"

Manton entered and was courteously motioned to a chair by the dwarf. He plunged into business at once.

"My name is George Manton, as you saw. You hold some paper with my signature on it—"

"And the name of Mr. Frederick Manton," said the dwarf.

The sum is, I think, eight hundred pounds," said Manton, waving the interruption aside with a gesture of his hand.

The dwarf did not move or speak.

Manton put his hand in his pocket, pulled out a roll of notes, and having taken two from the bundle, pushed the remainder across to Isaacs, saying:

"There is the money, Mr. Isaacs; will you kindly give me the documents."

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the hunchback. "You take my breath away, Mr. Manton. Why, the bills have a fortnight to run yet, and the discount is all paid! The discount up to the end of the fortnight is all paid, I assure you, Mr. Manton, every penny of it, and yet you want to take up the bills. Now, as an honest, straightforward, business man, I'll tell you what I should recommend you to do. Put your money somewhere for a fortnight and get a bit of interest on it. That will be clear profit to you, and at the end of the fortnight come to me and I'll have the bills."

Manton looked bitterly at the dwarf for a few seconds without speaking, and then said, in a worn, reproachful voice:

"And a nice discount you charged, Mr. Isaacs—fifty per cent. for three months."

The dwarf looked up into his face with a smile of crafty suavity.

"Oh, Mr. Manton! but think of the risk—look at the risk!"

"Well," said Manton, discontentedly, "the risk is all over now. There is your money. We have no occasion for more words."

"And you absolutely—you absolutely will not take my hint, and try and make a little bit of interest while this money is fairly yours? Bless my soul! but you are generous. Look you: if I should take your money now I should put it out at interest to-morrow, perhaps, and if I were only careful to place my money with gentlemen, thoroughly honourable gentlemen, like you and your brother, I might make fifty pounds, or even a little more, out of your eight hundred in the fortnight. Think over the matter. Bless my soul! money is not a thing to be despised these hard times."

"I have thought over the matter until I am tired and sick of it. I want to make no money of this eight hundred pounds; I want the bills. Take your money and let me go."

Isaacs leant back in his chair and twisted a quill pen between his finger and thumb thoughtfully for a moment. Then, throwing down the pen, he seized the elbows of the chair in his hand and thrust his head forward.

"The fact is, Mr. Manton, I have been terribly pressed myself for money of late—upon my honour I have—and I have been obliged to pass those bills away to a friend who has them, now as security for some money he lent me. What am I to do? I have not the bills by me!"

"Send for them," said Manton.

"But, my dear sir, I may confess to you now you are a gentleman, and will make no unfair use of what I'm going to say against an unfortunate man like me, who has been unlucky in business—I have not the eight hundred pounds to send!"

"There it is on the table," said Manton, impatiently. "Take that money and send for the bills. I have time to wait."

"Oh, Mr. Manton!" cried the hunchback, covering his face with his hands, "I cannot, and yet I must, tell you all. You will not, I know, betray me. I am a ruined man—I am a bankrupt! My friend Jacob, who lent me the money on these bills, believes I am wealthy—thinks I could draw a cheque now for a thousand pounds as easily as I can turn in this chair. I have not a penny in the world at this minute! Stop, I must not tell a lie!" He put his hand in his

pocket and pulled out a greasy, worn purse, and emptied its contents upon the table. "One, two, three—three one pound notes, one sovereign, three half crowns, a shilling, and a few coppers—say four, eight, ten; that is all the money I have in the world, Mr. Manton."

"But," said Manton, "there is the eight hundred on the table. Send Mr. Jacob the eight hundred and let him return my bills."

"Oh!" cried the hunchback, wringing his hands. "It must all come out, but I know you will not betray me; you yourself know what it is to be in difficulties. When I had money I helped you liberally."

Manton laughed bitterly.

"Well, I helped your brother, and what can be nearer and dearer than brothers, good brothers like you—"

"Let us keep to business," said Manton, with disgust.

"I will, indeed, Mr. Manton," said Isaacs. "It is a bitter business for me. You shall know all the truth. Jacobs lent me nine hundred pounds on these bills—that is, he trusted me for a hundred pounds over and above their value, and there would be no use in my sending eight hundred pounds for them. He would suspect something at once, and refuse to give them up."

"Suppose I go to Mr. Jacobs and offer him the eight hundred? He cannot refuse to give them up to me."

"He could, and he would!" said Isaacs, in a tone of despondency. "They are pledged to him for nine hundred pounds, and he would not give them up for less."

"Give me his address, and I'll very soon make him."

"Oh, for goodness sake, don't! I know you could legally, but as you love justice and mercy, and have some feeling for me in the case, don't go to law—don't think of going to law! What would happen to us all if we went to law? Suppose you put me in the witness-box—me, your friend, who advanced your brother money when he wanted it, who had the misfortune to advance your brother money, a paltry five-and-twenty pounds, on what purported to be a joint note of yours and his, and which he, Mr. Manton, afterwards confessed to me, with tears in his eyes, was forgery—the forgery of your name—and how you retired that bill by giving me a real one of yours and his for forty, and how I took it and let your brother off, and how you knew all about it. Do you know what they would call that, Mr. Manton? Do you know what those abominable lawyers would call this, Mr. Manton? Compounding a felony, sir—compounding a felony—compounding a felony!"

The dwarf looked up and glared apprehensively at Manton.

"What is to be done?" said the young man, in a low, tremulous voice.

The money-lender threw himself back in his chair and sighed as though relieved of a dreadful anxiety.

"Ah!" he said, "now we may be able to do something. Let me see—let me think! You couldn't put your hand on another hundred anywhere, could you?"

"I—might be able," said Manton, pale and hesitatingly.

"Then by heaven, sir!" said the hunchback, striking the table a tremendous blow with his right fist, "we can manage it, I think—I think we can manage it—and keep all snugly out of the courts!"

Manton put his trembling hand into his pocket, drew out one of the remaining hundred pound notes, and handed it to the dwarf.

The latter took it and the eight upon the table, counted them twice over carefully, and said:

"All right—quite right! Sit you here. I'll go myself to Jacobs and bring back the bills."

In a moment Manton was alone. The cold sweat of horror had broken out upon his forehead during this interview. He brushed it aside with his hand. What a narrow escape he had, he thought, of the dock, of imprisonment! To buy such deliverance at the price of a hundred

pounds seemed to him to be made a present of liberty by fate. In a few minutes the money-lender returned and handed the young man the bills. He did not linger in this place. After a few hurried words with Isaacs, he crushed the bills into his pocket and went away.

When he was gone the hunchback sat in his chair for a few moments without moving. Then he broke into a long, low laugh. When he had finished, he whispered to himself:

"Beautiful! beautiful! I was ready for him when he came. Mr. Jacob was my own pocket-book here," tapping his breast. "I walked over to the telegraph office in College Green and wired Edward Pryce that I'd done the trick and that he should have twenty-five. Fifty is all nonsense for him. Look at the state of my soul after this business!"

He took the nine notes out of his pocket and placed them in the safe behind him. Then he went out for a little walk, for, putting out of consideration the injury received by his soul in this transaction, a thing easy enough for him to do, he had done a very good day's work.

(To be continued.)

THE BLIND BEGGAR OF BAGNOLET.

Oh late I met, at Bagnolet,

A grey-beard with a constant smile;

Blind, from the wars he came away,

And poor, he begs, and sings the while;

He turns his viol, to repeat,

"Tis Pleasure's children I entreat!

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray—

And all are prompt to give and greet—

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray,

To the blind man of Bagnolet!"

A little damsel guides his way,

And when a joyous crowd he hears,

At revel on the green, he'll say,

"Like you, I danced in former years!

Young men, who press, with rapturous air,

The yielded hand of many a fair,

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray;

In youth, I did not oft despair—

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray,

To the blind man of Bagnolet!"

Where revellers in the bower carouse,

He says, "Remember, as ye pour,

That here the sunniest year allows

No vintage-gleanings to the poor!

Glad souls, whose merry faces shine

O'er beakers filled with aged wine—

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray,

The sourest draught's a treat in mine.

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray,

To the blind man of Bagnolet!"

Where, drinking deep, a soldier-band

In chorus shout their amorous lays,

And ring the glass from hand to hand,

To pledge the feats of other days,

He says, "By memory stirred to tears,

Enjoy what Friendship's charm endears—

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray;

Like you, I carried arms for years!

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray,

To the blind man of Bagnolet!"

In fine, we're bound in truth to state,

In quest of alms, 'tis said, he's seen

More rarely at the church's gate

Than near the tavern on the green!

With all whom Pleasure's garlands bind

The beggar and his rote I find—

"Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray—

Enjoyment makes the heart so kind!

Ah! give a trifle, give, I pray,

To the blind man of Bagnolet!"

THERE have been many definitions of a gentleman, but the prettiest and most poetic is that given by a lady. "A gentleman," says she, "is a human being combining a woman's tenderness with a man's courage."



[THE YOUNG ARTIST SAT IN HER WHEELED CHAIR, PALETTE ON THUMB, BRUSH IN HAND.]

DREDS AND FROTH.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

By A. H. WALL.

CHAPTER IX. (continued).

GUINEVERE TREGARTHEN lived an ideal life in this quiet, out-of-the-way part of the country, where neighbours, few and far apart, visited each other infrequently, in old-fashioned family coaches, with no small assumption of state and dignity, or on horseback, or drawn by ponies in little basket carriages.

She was a simple, warm-hearted little creature, refined and pure in every thought and aspiration, shut out by her great calamity from the precious hopes of wifehood or maternity, with all their sweet and gentle sympathies and all their nobly unselfish delights; but shut out also from the great outside world—from the coarseness, hardness, and meanness engendered by those feelings of scorn, contempt, and loathing, fear and suspicion, which are derived from intimate knowledge of and a share in its bitter strife and endless struggles. Nothing emanating from the mean, selfish, impure, or brutal had contaminated her healthily innocent and amiable nature.

The only male friend in whom she confided, with childlike frankness and sincerity, was her doctor, old Mr. Carew. He was a thin, tall, grey-bearded man, with a bald head, a narrow keen-edged face, and a large Roman nose, spectacled. He was demonstratively misanthropical, harsh in his opinions, cynical in his remarks, but naturally full of genial impulses and kindly feelings which he vainly endeavoured to disguise and suppress.

He disliked Mrs. Cochrane. He was very proud of being Miss Tregarthen's particular friend, he regarded her with strong admiration and affection, and he was of a decidedly jealous

disposition. In his dry, caustic way, he said of Guinevere's fair companion:

"That woman, my too trustful major, is not what she appears to be. Watch her cautiously. There is something strange about her—something unpleasantly curious, something that sits awkwardly upon her. This low, soft-speaking, melancholy woman, with her quiet, retiring ways, and her big, shy-looking, brown eyes, is deceiving you. I can read it in her face. She is hiding something; and every fool knows where there is something hidden there is something wrong. Why did you take her without a proper reference?"

Now, this question hit a weak point with the major, and made him wince. He was always ill at ease when the doctor compelled him to confess that of Mrs. Cochrane's antecedents he knew literally nothing. His daughter had boarded with her in the same house in Torquay, where the chance acquaintanceship had ripened quickly into friendship. When the advertisement headed, "Wanted, a suitable companion for an invalid young lady," appeared in a daily paper, Miss Tregarthen was delighted to receive Mrs. Cochrane's application, and references had neither been offered nor sought.

The doctor commented upon the above fact, at home to his wife and amongst his friends, very severely. More than once, too, he was rudely irritable and impatient with the gentlemanly major, and could not refrain from sneering at him when, by way of a lame excuse for neglecting what the doctor described as his parental duty in this matter, the major pointed out, in his slow, state-procession way of speaking, that he had very carefully traced one branch of the noble family of Cochrane into Suffolk, where Mrs. Cochrane had informed them her grandfather had lived.

It was this Dr. Carew who compared the major's gentlemanly reflections to those of a mirror.

One day the doctor happened to hear the major's ancient housekeeper say to the laundry-maid: "It's very strange that her name should

be Cochrane, when all her underlinen is marked 'A. W.'!"

And he recalled that remark, with a "big, big D," one day not long after, when he took up the day's newspaper, and read in what is called "the agony column" an advertisement which ran as follows:

"A. W. must return to her home at once if she would escape eternal disgrace. Otherwise her secret flight and continued absence will constitute legal ground for a divorce."

"I'm half inclined to ask the advertiser for his address through this same channel," said the doctor; "for I firmly believe that this Mrs. Cochrane is the 'A. W.' he is addressing. I should like to bowl her out!"

"Of course she is!" said Mrs. Carew, triumphantly. "Why, those are the very initials which the major's housekeeper spoke about as being on her clothes. Don't you remember, love? I know what it is. She has deserted her home and children—that's why she always looks so melancholy; that is what she's done! You always said she was a bad one!"

"Yes; although I did think at the time that they were not her own clothes, and that it would turn out a police affair," said the doctor; "but, with this new light on the matter, I'm of your opinion. She has deserted her deeply-wronged husband and her poor little children."

"The infatuated wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Carew, affectionately embracing the youngest of her own seven little ones.

CHAPTER X.

A "MODEL" MOTHER.

It isn't mich o' th' world aw know,
But aw con truly say
A faithful heart's too rich to throw
Witha at a thowt away.

JOHN HARTLEY.

THE clear, bright, northern light was falling through the upper parts of the two tall windows

of Miss Tregarthen's spacious painting-room, upon old Bess Jenkins, who was giving what is technically called a "sitting."

Her husband and several of her neighbours had already given her sittings for the group of figures to which that of old Bess was being added.

The young artist sat in her wheeled chair, propped up with cushions, palette on thumb, brush in hand, very intent on the canvas on its easel before her. Mrs. Cochrane sat by the open window, thinking and reading. Twice that morning had she determined to announce her forthcoming departure; twice her heart had failed her, and the unpleasant task had been postponed. Her thoughts still ran in that direction, and were not with the words she read.

When the sitting was over, Mrs. Cochrane said:

"Have you any relative in London, Mrs. Jenkins? I ask because you so closely resemble someone I know there."

The old woman turned upon her with a sudden start, saying in a quick, eager way:

"Ay, have I, dearie, surely! An' he were ailer so much like me! So he were! T'es my son Jacky!"

A sudden paleness spread itself over the questioner's face.

"Does he come to see you often?" is the next question, put faintly, and with a faltering voice.

The old woman shakes her head sadly, and unbidden tears arise, as she replies:

"Aw, dear no! The Lord ha' laid His hand yere, on this pair auld heart, heavily—heavy! Jacky never came to me again, never; and yet he were alive, an' might ha' thought how weel I loved him when he wear so little! An' you've seen him, my dear!—knows my long-lost son, my Jacky, up there in the great London church town! Aw, dear! aw, dear! I'm 'maased' w' joy, and all of a 'tremblin', and I cannot see yer for the tears."

Looking with the deepest sympathy upon the poor old creature, whose withered, wrinkled brown hands were busy wiping away the rapidly coming tears with her coarse apron, Mrs. Cochrane said, hastily:

"No, no; pray do not mistake me. He is like you—very like you—most strangely like you; and yet, you know, he may not be your son. He is a great man, a knight, Sir John Weeldon, a Member of Parliament, one of the sheriffs, and an alderman of the City of London."

Mrs. Jenkins gave her eyes a final wipe, and let her hands fall heavily into her lap.

"Weeldon! Sir John!" she exclaimed, angrily. "Then why said yer he were my son?"

"That was your mistake, dear," explained Miss Tregarthen. "Mrs. Cochrane only said that Sir John Weeldon, in London, was like you—singularly like you; that was all."

For a moment the old woman sat, feeling, as she said, "ghastly and skereed like," unable to realize the terrible disappointment; but when she grew calmer she told them the story of her favourite son and of his sudden disappearance, and of the reasons they had for believing that he had gone away to London.

"How old was he when he ran away?"

"Ten year!"

"How old is he now, if he is alive?"

"Forty year, more."

"Sir John Weeldon's age is forty-three."

"He would be about that, my dearie, jest. Aw, loar!"

Reassured by this brief conversation, Mrs. Cochrane heaved a deep sigh of relief, and joyously concluded that there was no longer any real occasion for flight or fear. She believed that in this old woman she saw her husband's mother, but since he had never owned or in any way recognized or made himself known to her since he first left home, so long ago, she was convinced that the very last spot in the world that he would think of visiting would be this.

"I know him better than ever," she said, bitterly, to herself, "and I am safer here, close beside the parents he is ashamed of, than I should be in any other part of the world."

When the sitter had departed, Guinevere said:

"And is Sir John Weeldon really so much like her, Alice?"

"The likeness is really wonderful."

"And you said there was reason for supposing that he came from Cornwall?"

"That was only a suspicion, and well as I knew him, and well as others knew him, I don't think there is anyone living but himself who knows who his parents are, and I do not think he has the slightest knowledge of where they are, or whether they are alive or dead."

"That man must have been born without a heart—he is a monster!"

"He is, indeed, a hard, cruel man."

The little wealdon church which we visited with the Jenkins family is the scene which Miss Tregarthen is now painting, with old Bess in the little grass-grown graveyard for one of the most prominent of its many figures.

She could not have selected a subject more locally characteristic, or a more picturesque one. Bright in colour and full of action, there was yet a peacefulness and serenity in its general tone and sentiment which made itself at once felt. The drawing, composition, light, shade, colour and expression, were all masterly. The golden gorse and the purple heather clustering about the rude, gray stone wall upon which some of the figures were seated; the deep mass of beautifully transparent shadow stealing over the distant hills; the little, old, ivy-shrouded tower; the tiny, Norman porch, with its broken carving, its velvety mosses and bright lichens, and the grass growing on its dilapidated roof; the dappled blue and white of sunny cloud and sky; the parson's little bay horse tethered to the gate, and the parson himself shaking hands with some of his flock while on his way to mount—all were reproduced with wondrous fidelity.

Mrs. Cochrane thought it a masterpiece, and every day visitors came to see its progress, who spoke of it with the greatest enthusiasm and delight. The models went away to talk about it. Its fame was spreading fast.

"If your name is not already made," said Dr. Carew, "that ought to make it."

The old fisherwoman stood before the picture silent and motionless for some moments, and then, with a laugh expressive of wonder and delight, said:

"I knows 'em all, every one, my dearie. Aw, loar! to think of me and my old man, too, 'bein' in a pictur!"

When Bess sat for the second time, a few days after, a new idea struck Guinevere—she made a separate study of the old woman and talked of her lost son to her while she painted, and, when she had gone, said triumphantly to Mrs. Cochrane:

"I believe I shall catch the dear old creature's exact expression, and if I do it will appeal to the hearts of all who see it. Ah! how fondly she cherishes the memory of that worthless young scamp! how firmly she believes that he is living and will some day come back to her, poor old soul! Her son Owen is so true and good to her! The old couple are growing too aged for work, and it is he who looks after them and provides them with all their little comforts and luxuries. And yet it is not Owen, but his runaway brother, who has the largest share of the old woman's heart. She will never believe that Jacky is dead!"

"I, too, believe that he is living, but I am sure that he will never come back to her."

"I know. You think this Sir John Weeldon really is her son. How romantic!"

"If you knew him as well as I do, you would think so, too. It is impossible that such a resemblance should be accidental."

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Carew. He bowed stiffly to Mrs. Cochrane, and greeted his patient with effusive tenderness.

After again admiring the painting and reprophesying its fame, the doctor said:

"You are working too hard, my dear; you must have a rest. I want to put the key of this painting-room in my pocket and keep it there for a week—a whole week, my dear. I'm think-

ing of sending you back to Torquay. The air is just now a little too moist here—there it is still dry and bright. Indeed, I have already, with your father's consent, written to—"

"Stay a moment, doctor dear, you are just a little too expeditious in carrying out your plans for my good. The fact is, I have already made another arrangement. Dear Mrs. Cochrane and myself are going to Camelford for a week. I have written to the Dalcoaths, and they are most anxious to receive us."

The doctor's face, as he heard this, was very expressive of annoyance and perplexity. He said, after a pause:

"Well, well! we shall hear what the major says to it."

The doctor, leaving the studio, sought the major and carried him off to the library, where the two sat down together, gravely, for a very serious consultation.

"Look here, major!" said the doctor, sternly.

"I told you there was something wrong about this Mrs. Cochrane, and there is. In the first place, she's here under a false name. Her real name is Weeldon—Alice Weeldon. The name of her grandfather, on the mother's side, really was Cochrane, but her maiden name was Grant. I have every reason to believe that I know something about her father's family, and if I do, her father is the son of an old fellow-student of mine, at Guy's, and is now living in the North of England. I haven't heard from him for years, but I saw his name in a local paper some months since. You see how strangely things come about in real life."

"But, er—" began the major, hesitatingly.

"But the doctor cried impatiently:

"No, no, my dear major, neither butter nor milk will do now. You must, for once, be neither soft nor sweet. This woman is dangerous! She's mad!"

"Mad!" gasped the major.

"Yes, mad! Has been in a lunatic asylum; cut off all her hair, and threatened her husband, poor fellow, with the scissors."

"Who is her husband?"

"Sir John Weeldon, M.P. Here is a letter from him—read it."

The major took up the letter and read:

"DEAR SIR,—I have very little doubt about the correctness of your surmises. The lady you describe is, I strongly suspect, my wife. She has been confined for many months in a lunatic asylum. She ran away from her home after a scene of sudden and unaccountable violence some six months ago, previously cutting off all her hair, which was then very beautiful. She also threatened murder or suicide with the large scissors she had employed for that purpose, and is, I should think, a very dangerous person to take charge of so helpless an invalid. The name of Cochrane was that of her mother's father; her own maiden name was Grant. Her father—who may be alive or dead for aught I know or wish to know about him—was the son of a gentleman of your own profession, who had been in the army and had settled in Suffolk—if my memory does not play me false, in Ipswich, close by which town the late Squire Cochrane resided. Grant junior was a civil engineer. I give you all these particulars in order that you may satisfy yourself as to the correctness or otherwise of your suspicion. Your description of the lady agrees in every point with that of Mrs. Weeldon. If we are right, pray send me an immediate telegram, when I will at once take the necessary steps for her recovery.—Yours faithfully,

"JOHN WEELDON."

"Well, major, what's to be done?" asked the doctor, when this letter was perused and laid down. "Something must be done, and sharply too."

"Suppose Sir John Weeldon is, is, er, subreptitiously—"

"Bah! suppose nothing of the sort. Suppose your daughter is alone with a dangerous lunatic and—"

The major changed colour and rose at once.

"I'll go—T'll, at least, send somebody to—to fetch her away at once."

The bell rang, John appeared—no longer in

livery, for John, being a general utility man, as an actor might say, had been at work in the stable.

"John!" cried the doctor, "tell Miss Tregarthen her father wishes to see her alone, here in the library."

John disappeared.

"What will you proceed to, er, to do, doctor?"

"Put the entire affair before her. Then she'll see the necessity of at once parting with this mad woman; she won't otherwise."

"And then I, er, presume our next proceeding will, I, I anticipate, be to, er—"

"Dismiss her? No. Keep a careful watch upon her until the husband comes."

"I hope he'll not be long."

Presently John wheeled the little artist into the library.

She listened with deep emotion to Dr. Carew's story of how he overheard the housekeeper mention the initials "A.W.," how he chanced to see the advertisement addressed to "A.W.," and how he had inserted another advertisement, inviting the searcher for "A.W." to communicate with him. Then he placed before her the alderman's letter.

Guinevere read it with a sternly compressed brow and heaving breast. She was evidently strongly excited, but she mastered her emotion bravely. After reading it twice she carefully folded and returned it to the doctor, saying:

"You have got part of the story, doctor, but not the whole. I have some clues to the remainder. Promise that you will not take another step in this matter until I have had a private interview with Mrs. Weeldon."

As she spoke, Guinevere grasped the wheels of her chair as if to move it.

"You believe that she is Mrs. Weeldon?"

"I am sure she is."

"And, therefore, that she is mad?"

"And, therefore, that she is perfectly sane."

"Don't talk like that, or I shall think you've caught her complaint," says the doctor, jocularly. "You have read what her husband says. The woman has been in a lunatic asylum."

"I have read more than Sir John Weeldon's letter on that subject, doctor. I have read the newspapers, and I know that by design and by mistake many sane persons are shut up with the insane. Mrs. Cochrane—Mrs. Weeldon, I should say—is no more a mad woman than you are, doctor."

"But her husband—"

"Is, I have reason to believe, a thoroughly heartless, revengeful, cruel man, who only wishes to recover possession of her person that he may again imprison her in one of those awful places—to drive her mad, or kill her—who knows which?"

The doctor smiled.

"You have been reading too many novels, my dear," said he. "You have been inoculated with the wild fancies of writers of the Charles Reade persuasion, a most imaginative novelist, who himself strengthens my theory that—"

"Doctor—father, be reasonable. You have seen her—you have both seen her day after day almost, and I am always with her. Could she be mad and so deceive us all? Ask the servants—ask everybody who has been brought in contact with her, if they have discovered in Mrs. Cochrane's manners, conversation, actions, in anything that she has said or done, the slightest indication of even eccentricity—not to say madness?"

The doctor looked down upon the excited little being in the chair, with one white, thin hand grasping either wheel, and said calmly, with an air of profound superiority:

"My dear Miss Tregarthen, you must keep cool and quiet. And you must remember that you are talking about something of which you are profoundly ignorant. I have had much to do with lunatics in the course of my practice. Mad people are the finest actors in the world; indeed, I have a very strongly supported theory which convinces me that madness is the true basis of all real excellence in acting. Garrick was mad, Macready was mad, Booth was mad, Ed-

mund Kean was mad, and Henry Irving, for aught I know, may be as mad as they were. Where will you find such morbidly excessive vanity as you find amongst actors, except amongst lunatics or people who are trembling on the extreme verge of insanity? Why, what is madness but the power of going out of your own mind into that of some imaginary being, as actors do, more or less perfectly in proportion as they are more or less mad. Why, my dear girl, I could take you to some asylums where—"

And here the doctor, having mounted one of his favourite hobbies, on which he galloped quite as hard as the major did on his genealogical hobby, would have spurred it on into heaven knows what wild lengths if the artist had not cried out:

"I must go back at once, or the paint will be so hard that my glazings will not lie properly. Ring for John!"

Then, without waiting for aid, she began to propel her chair towards the door.

"But, my dear, this mad woman—" began the major.

"Is no more mad to-day than she has been on any day since I first knew her."

And the doctor, seeing how excited his patient was, secretly signed to the father to let Guinevere have her way, himself pushed her chair from the library and helped to take it up into the studio. Returning to the major, he said:

"We must humour her; she is already too much excited by this affair. We will send her to Torquay, and telegraph for the husband in the morning."

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNEXPECTED CHAMPION.

Such is the might of maidenhood,
That even lions hath subdued.

B. M. RANKING.

THE doctor, having assisted Miss Tregarthen in returning to her studio, left her, with some half-expressed reluctance, alone with Mrs. Weeldon, who was still sitting by the open window, reading.

For a time Guinevere went on with her painting in silence, but presently she put the palette and pencils on the stand beside her, and with two or three quick turns of the wheel brought her chair up to that of Mrs. Weeldon.

"My dear, sweet friend, I want you to listen to me very quietly, and be very brave."

She spoke in a tone so unusually grave and impressive that Mrs. Weeldon looked into her face wonderingly.

"I want you to tell me something about your husband!"

"About my—my husband!" she faltered.

It flashed at once into this poor woman's tremblingly apprehensive mind that her terrible secret was in peril of discovery.

"Yes, about your husband. I am your true friend, my dear; I love you with all my heart; there surely need be no restraint with me. Treat me as you would treat the sister you have lost; call me by her name, if you please; and let there be no more secrets between us than there were between yourself and Clara."

Mrs. Weeldon blushed, and grew pale. She said, in a low, tremulous voice:

"I told you that he was alive, and that we were separated; it is a painful subject."

She felt that all her best efforts at self-control were failing her, and glancing with a startled, inquiring expression into her companion's eyes, murmured:

"There is some hidden meaning in your words. I am afraid of you."

"You need not be. What I really mean is this: Dr. Carew thinks he knows your husband. He says he is a man of wealth and high position in the City of London!"

Mrs. Weeldon started in an instant to her feet, and threw a wild glance towards the window, as if, high as it was, she would leap from it. Her lips formed words she was unable to utter, her bosom heaved tumultuously.

Guinevere bent forward with a gesture of alarm, and clutched her dress.

"Do not excite yourself; you are quite safe here; but I want you to tell me the truth—the whole truth!"

"Is he here?"

"Who?"

"My—my husband!"

"No!" exclaimed Guinevere, with great emphasis.

"Is he coming?"

"He does not know that you are here for certain."

"What have you heard?"

"That which I know is a gross falsehood—that you are—mad!"

The last word was spoken in a whisper. It made the listener's blood run cold. She stood for a moment like a statue—breathless and motionless—and then sank back into her chair, covering her face with her hands, and bursting into tears.

Miss Tregarthen's compassionate eyes filled, too. She drew herself nearer to the poor hunted-down, despairing wife, and drawing her head gently to her own fluttering bosom, pressed it to her with trembling hands, tenderly caressing, filled to overflowing with the deepest love and pity.

"You do not know—you cannot imagine—the dreadful usage I have endured at his hands," Mrs. Weeldon sobbed. "He made me loathe him, but still I did not willingly forsake him. I always shrank from the thought of that—it seemed disgraceful—but at last he drove me from him frantic with fear and horror. I would rather die than look upon his face again!"

And then the poor wife's ghastly story was all laid bare. Miss Tregarthen heard in a tumult of passionate emotion with what cruelty this warm-hearted, affectionate woman had been isolated from her mother and sister. She told her how she had seen Clara singing ballads in the street for a living, and how in the wild horror of that shameful sight she had struggled to throw herself from the carriage which her husband refused to stop, had been forcibly restrained, and while still in a state of intense excitement, was treated as a mad creature, pronounced insane by three famous doctors, and shut up for ten long months of intense misery and torture amongst lunatics in an asylum. She said:

"You can conceive nothing more dreadful than that was! And to escape from it I had to lie basely and shamefully, to deny the very existence of the dear mother and my loving, devoted sister, whose absence and silence were eating my heart away!"

When all was told, Guinevere, still folding her in her loving arms, said:

"You must pack up and leave this place to-night. My friend in Camelford will receive you and protect you. Oh! how I wish I had known all this before!"

"My poor, dear little darling, what could you have done for me?" moaned the unhappy wife. "Ah, Guinevere! why should I ask you to share the sorrows of another, you who are so frail and helpless, and so great a sufferer, who have so much to bear yourself?"

Guinevere smiled proudly.

"Would you make me more helpless than I am—deprive such a poor, forlorn little she-creature as I am of all share in the nobility of living? You shall see what I can do—you shall see what I can do for you; and guess how proud I am to do it. Helpless! Nonsense! The strongest and most helpful in the land can do nothing more powerful than this—protect the innocent, shelter the oppressed, and baffle the mighty in the very midst of their triumphant wrong-doing; and this, weak and helpless as you call me, I mean to do for you—for you, my darling—whom I love and honour with all my inmost heart and soul! Stay here—fear not, and trust in me; I'll be back directly."

With a few vigorous turns of the hastily-clutched wheels she propelled her chair to the door, contrived with difficulty and impatience to open it, disappeared, the wheels proclaiming by their sound how rapidly she travelled.

Dr. Carew, having matured his plans and bidden the major adieu in the library, was met

emerging from the door by John and the page, who, hastily summoned by her voice, were carrying Miss Tregarthen in her wheeled chair down the broad oaken staircase. Seeing him, she cried out:

"Just the man I am looking for! Come into the dining-room, doctor; I want to speak with you privately."

"You have been over-exciting yourself, my dear; this is very wrong. I can see it at a glance; your nerves are in a terrible state of tension. We shall have you in hysterics, if we don't take care. What has happened?"

"Take a chair, doctor. I've a long story to tell."

"You had better postpone it, my dear, until you are calmer; your eyes are all ablaze with excitement."

"Which will terribly increase, unless you sit down and listen to me."

The doctor reluctantly submitted.

And then, with a sweet eloquence and pathos and an intensity of dramatic power, begotten of powerful feeling, that could not fail to reach the heart, she told the story of Mrs. Weeldon's wrongs.

The doctor listened at first with a smile of incredulity, and then grew impatient, muttering every now and then, "A most improbable thing!" or "Just so! precisely what a mad woman would say!" or "A most unnatural idea!" or "Preposterous!" and so on. But when Miss Tregarthen had wound up her impassioned narrative there were tears in his eyes, although he said:

"My dear young lady, all that you have mentioned only confirms the sad impression we have such just cause for. Every madhouse doctor can tell you that it is the people with extraordinary imaginative powers who go mad, and this poor creature's wild romance, touching as it is—I must confess it moved even me to tears—is, in reality, a part of her disease. A great authority in our profession once wrote of lunatics in the Bicêtre, 'Those were chiefly affected who belonged to professions in which the imagination is unceasingly or ardently engaged.' Dr. Abercrombie's opinion—one of great value—was that where the imagination luxuriates amidst fancied scenes of a sensational kind, exciting strong mental emotions out of all natural proportion with their unreal causes, there are sown the seeds of madness, which if not—"

"Now, doctor, do spare me a long lecture on your favourite subject, and tell me what you intend to do in this matter of Mrs. Cochrane."

"Mrs. Cochrane?"

"Don't be irritating, doctor! I mean Mrs. Weeldon, of course."

"That will depend upon her husband's decision. We cannot assume—"

"Have you told him that his wife is here?"

"I have not."

"Then don't."

"But we must! The law—"

"But you mustn't!"

"But, really now, my dear Miss Tregarthen, do, pray—"

Again she interrupts him, saying:

"Doctor, I honour and esteem you above all the men I have ever known; I love you as dearly as I could if you were my father! When I was a little, tiny girl, and able to run about in the sunshine chasing 'the butterflies and plucking the flowers, I used to sit upon your knee and play with your beard while you told me stories. I have grown up to regard you as my truest, dearest friend; but, doctor"—and here her voice changed to one of grave and solemn earnestness—"if you lend yourself to this cause of the wrong-doer, and barbarously, heartlessly, hunt down this poor, lonely, despairing creature to a cruel end—if you do this, and subject her to all the horrible sufferings from which only secret and sudden flight can save her, never expect to hear my voice or see me smile upon you again!"

The doctor gazed at her with surprise. He had never seen her in such a mood before. It startled him, and, rising, he paced the room quickly, greatly excited and perplexed.

"For aught we know," said he, remonstratingly, "this woman may be dangerous. Insane people are so crafty; they show imagination enough and invention enough to deceive the very devil himself!"

"Doctor! doctor! Do I not tell you that she is sane, perfectly sane?"

"Tut! tut! tut! tut! tut! How can that be when three eminent members of my own profession have, as you confess—"

"Been deceived by the crafty cunning and imaginative power of Sir John Weeldon."

The doctor paces the room in silence, but more slowly.

Presently he pauses, and, with his finger and thumb busy about his chin and mouth, says, thoughtfully:

"I'll see her myself!"

"That's exactly what I was going to propose. Come along!"

"All right! but keep your hands from those wheels, please. I'm going to take you up myself, you wilful, desperate, little rebel!"

The two women were more than a match for the doctor. He came away from them convinced almost against his will that Mrs. Weeldon really was sane; and, moreover, he promised—reluctantly at first, but afterwards with earnestness and fervour—that Mrs. Grant and Clara should be actively sought for, and that he would write at once to his old friend the army surgeon in the north, and ascertain if the father of Mrs. Weeldon was actually his son.

(To be continued.)

PHOTOGRAPHING THE BABY.—By the time the start for the gallery is made the baby is thoroughly exhausted and out of patience. The whole party go along, of course. When the gallery is reached, coaxing, tickling, and baby talk all fail to put the subject into a good humour. One says she doesn't see what makes him so cross. Another wonders what makes him act so. Still another declares that he must be sick. The photographer then comes to the rescue. He has had experience in many just such cases, and knows what to do. He cannot do anything but what is a novelty to the baby, and he generally succeeds in quieting the child, and successfully producing his likeness. He does it in the midst of difficulties though. He has all the elderly attendants of the baby to combat at first. They finally realize the fact that the artist can do better without their efforts, and as they go homeward one says: "How quickly he got the baby still! It's perfectly wonderful! Some men do take to children that way, and can do anything they want with them. I don't wonder they take all their babies to him to have their pictures taken!"

SHERIDAN'S WAGER.—The anecdotes told of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who was such a famous wit in London years ago, seem to be almost without number. On one occasion he had a dispute with the Prince Regent as to how much better turkeys could walk than geese. The prince said that a turkey could walk twice as far as a goose in a given space of time. Sheridan denied it, and a wager was made. The wit remembered that turkeys go to roost early, and that geese could be driven night and day. He found a flock of geese, and the prince brought his flock of turkeys to the starting-point. Sheridan so arranged it that the race did not begin till late in the afternoon. At first the turkeys outstripped the geese, and the prince laughed at the wit. But Sheridan only smiled and said nothing. When darkness fell, the trouble with the turkeys began. They got into the hedges, and flew into the roadside trees, and, in spite of all their drivers could do, they would go no further. But presently the geese came in sight. They walked along ahead of their drivers, and never offered to stop. The geese passed the place where the turkeys were roosting, and kept on all night. When the time that had been agreed upon for the race to end had expired, the geese were far ahead of the turkeys, and Sheridan won his wager.

THE HOUSEWIFE.

OYSTER SAUCE.—Beard the oysters (the number must depend on the quantity required), strain their liquor and let it stand for any sediment to fall, then pour it off clear into a saucepan, and add one blade of mace and two or three white peppercorns; let it boil for a few minutes, then throw in the oysters to let them just boil up; take them out and strain the liquor; boil the oysters and liquor again, adding some butter which has been rubbed in flour (on a trencher) and a little cream or milk.

BREAD SAUCE.—Boil half pint of milk and put into it a teaspoonful of bread crumbs, a little powdered, small chopped onion which has been boiled in three waters, and let it simmer twenty minutes, then add a bit of fresh butter rolled in flour; just boil up, and serve.

FAMILY POUND CAKE.—One pound of flour, dried; half pound of butter beat to a cream; half pound of pounded white sugar; half pound of currants, dried (these may of course be omitted, or caraways substituted, if preferred); four eggs; half a pint of milk. Bake it carefully.

TREACLE PARKINS.—One quart of oatmeal; three pounds of treacle; three quarters pound of sugar; a little butter and a little flour. Sweetmeat or caraways, ad libitum. Mix all together, then roll it out thin and cut into round cakes. Bake on a tin.

BARLEY WATER.—Wash a quarter pound of pearl barley, boil it up in a little water and pour the water off; add three pints of boiling soft water to the barley, and let it boil one hour and a half; strain and set aside for use; add to the barley about half the former quantity of water, and boil as before; strain, and when cold add to the former; it is flavoured to the taste with any ingredient, or may be simply warmed with milk.

EGG AND COFFEE.—There are various recipes for preparing and refining coffee; the following is the best that has ever come under our view, and is available in all places. Procure your coffee fresh roasted and not too brown, in the proportion of a quarter of a pound for three persons. Let it be Mocha, and grind it just before using. Put it in a basin, and break into it an egg, yolk, white, shell and all. Mix it up with a spoon to the consistency of mortar, place it with warm—not boiling—water in the coffee-pot, let it boil up and break three times, then stand a few minutes, and it will be as clear as amber, and the egg will give it a rich taste.

A STUFFED LOIN OF MUTTON.—Take the skin of a loin of mutton with the flap on; bone it neatly; make a nice veal stuffing and fill the inside of the loin with it where the bones were removed; roll it up tight, skewer the flap, and tie twine round it to keep it firmly together; put the outside skin over it till nearly roasted, and then remove it that the mutton may brown. Serve with a nice gravy as for hare.

EYE BREAD.—Many cooks fancy that it is a great undertaking to make rye bread, and to have it good. Here are directions for making it, and if carefully followed the bread will be excellent: Take two cups of Indian meal; make in a thick batter with scalding water; when cool add a small cup of white bread sponge, a little sugar and salt, and a teaspoonful of soda, dissolved. In this stir as much rye as is possible with a spoon; let it rise until it is very light, then work in with your hand as much rye as you can, but do not knead it, as that will make it hard; put it in buttered bread tins, and let it rise for about fifteen minutes, then bake for an hour and a half, cooling the oven gradually for the last twenty minutes.

SWEETMEAT TARTS.—Make a little short paste, roll it, and line your tins; prick them in the inside, and so bake them. When you serve them up, put in any sort of sweetmeats. You may have a different sort day by day, by keeping the shells ready baked by you.

USEFUL HINTS AND RECIPES.

TO RESTORE TAINTED GAME OR ANY OTHER MEAT SO AS TO BE FIT FOR USE.—Prepare it for cooking, then wrap the game in a fine linen cloth closely sewed in every part, so as to prevent any dust or cinder getting in; when this is done take a fire-shovel full of hot charcoal or live coal, and throw into a bucket of cold water, and dip the game into it, and allow it to remain five minutes; and upon taking it out, all the offensive smell will be removed, and it will be perfectly fit for use, but it must be dressed immediately.

RECIPE FOR TAKING WAX OUT OF CLOTH.—Hold a red-hot iron (a poker will do) steadily within an inch or so of the cloth, and in a few minutes the wax will wholly evaporate; then rub the cloth with some whitish brown paper to remove any mark that may remain.

DELICIOUS SALINE DRAUGHTS.—Carbonate of soda and white sugar, of each twenty grains; lemon or tartaric acid, twenty-five grains; mix with water, in two glasses, as usual. If you substitute a half lemon for the acid, it is still nicer.

A CURE FOR RHEUMATISM.—Mix well together one quarter of an ounce of ether and an ounce of amber oil. Rub the part affected first with a flannel, till quite warm. Repeat the application till cured.

RECENT COLD.—A teaspoonful of sal-volatile, taken in a small quantity of water or white wine whey at bed-time, is a good remedy for a recent cold. Bathing the nose in warm water is also a great relief.

RECIPE FOR THE STING OF A WASP, BEE, OR OTHER INSECT.—Wet the part stung, and rub a piece of indigo upon it, which will instantly remove the pain.

TO GET RID OF THE STING OF A NETTLE OR OTHER VEGETABLE.—Rub the part affected with balm, rosemary, mint, or any other aromatic herb, and the smart will at once cease.

RECIPE FOR BURNS.—For a burn by vitriol or by any similar cause, apply the white of eggs, mixed with powdered chalk, and lay it over the parts burnt with a feather, and it will afford immediate relief. We have seen this tried most successfully to a child who had accidentally taken some vitriol into its mouth.

USE OF SALT TO PREVENT STAINS.—If red wine, fruit, jams, etc., etc., be spilt on a table cloth, the anti-economical mode of removing them is either to apply bleaching liquor at home, or, if we are too idle, or too much occupied, or too careless about the matter, we give general directions to our laundress, and she either extracts the stains or not, "as it may happen;" and too often, if the former, it is done with so little caution that the liquid is spilled where it is not required, and not being noticed, cannot be washed out, and the consequence is that beautiful table linen is frequently found with holes that are perfectly unaccountable to the owner; and blame attaches, in consequence, to all who have to do with it. Bleaching liquid is very seldom required to be used in a family if due attention be paid to a stain. The moment it is made, let salt (common table salt) be rubbed on the spot before it has time to dry. The use of the salt is to keep it damp till the cloth is taken to the wash, when, without any further trouble or attention, it will entirely disappear by the usual process of washing. If the stain has had time to dry, the application of salt will too often fail in the effect intended; and then the use of bleaching liquor will probably be required. This, if cautiously rinsed out from the linen, will not injure cotton or linen goods.

HAIR DYE.—A scientific contemporary states that a subcutaneous injection of small quantities of the salts of pilocarpine has lately produced some remarkable results in stimulation of and altering the colour of the hair.

THE
GHOST OF THE REGISTER.

A CURATE'S EXPERIENCE.

By J. J. BRITTON.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE in my short story to deal with our curate, the Reverend Thomas Tompkins Hobday, and in order to bring this gentleman properly upon the stage of this history, it behoves me to go back to a period of his life just half a year before he became the clerical assistant to the rector of Claypole, and consequently our "very own" new curate.

Immediately after taking orders the Reverend T. T. Hobday had obtained a curacy in the north of England, and the scene of his opening labours in the ministry was the forsaken, desolate Yorkshire village of Staunton.

The rector of Staunton was a wheezy old gentleman who had been a great scholar and an accomplished wit in his day, but that day was long gone by, and he was then only a long, gaunt, grey relic of a handsome gentleman, much troubled with asthma, and unable very often to take any part of the church services in the damp, mouldy, greenish village church, which still retained the high pews and three-decker pulpit of the days of our sovereign lady Queen Anne, and which was consequently left very much to the care of the young and rather timid-looking Mr. Hobday.

Mr. Hobday, however, on his arrival in the village, was very kindly taken in hand by the Misses Shrimpton and Mrs. Entwistle, who were the ruling powers in Staunton, and who put the curate, as they had every preceding curate for thirty years past, through his paces. By them he was instructed as to the proper mode of conducting the service; when to visit the Sunday-school, and what to say when he got there; "what to eat, drink and avoid;" and what sort of sermon he should or should not preach to the score or so of farm-labourers and the dozen of old ladies who made up his congregation.

The only recreation he had a chance of indulging in was a game of whist now and then at the rectory, for the asthmatic rector was a sensible man, and did not despise a rubber (though to the Misses Shrimpton cards were more than an abomination), and an occasional chat with the doctor upon archeological subjects.

Close to the church was an ancient stone edifice which might possibly have belonged, as was reported, to the old parsonage, the greater part of which had long since fallen into ruins and had been carted away to do duty in the construction of more modern houses and to repair the churchyard wall. What still remained habitable was a three-storied structure, and was tenanted by a forlorn widow, who had been from time immemorial letter of apartments to the curates of Staunton.

It was understood that whenever a curate came to the place it was his duty immediately to rent the sitting-room and the bedroom of Mrs. Marby; and few, indeed, if any, dared to resist their doom.

Certainly Mr. Hobday was not one to set himself in opposition to the established routine of things in Staunton. He had no doubt, on first inspection, imagined that there might have been a livelier dwelling for a single young man than the parlour and bedroom pointed out to him, both of which had windows opening upon the churchyard, and commanded a fine prospect of gravestones.

Miss Shrimpton the elder, however, had stated that it was a very eligible lodging, and that "all the curates took it;" and so he, with a furtive sigh, succumbed to the inevitable.

Mr. Hobday was not by any means an imbecile; he had lofty ideas as to his clerical office,

and very proper mourned over the mouldy state of the parish church and the feebleness of the services. He had once endeavoured to write a prize poem; could play croquet (which was then the fashionable game) when asked to do so; had sent some lines to a clerical magazine; and was reported to have been in love before he was ordained.

He had, moreover, a taste for antiquities, and was given to hunting up stray facts as to the old mullioned farmhouses in the neighbourhood, and the ruins on a neighbouring hill of what the people thereabouts called the "monkery," meaning, it is to be assumed, the monastery.

It may reasonably be suspected that the tenement presided over by the forlorn widow, and to which he had been delivered over a captive, had found, in spite of its cheerlessness of aspect, some favour in his sight by reason of its undoubted Tudor character and the exceeding venerableness of the stone-mullioned windows of his little parlour.

So he made himself tolerably comfortable there. He unpacked his one box of books and commenced, incited thereto by the doctor, to smoke in the evenings, when all fear of the censure of the Misses Shrimpton or the other female rulers of the parish could be laid aside.

But I have, after all, not much to do with the parish of Staunton, or its asthmatic rector, or its cabinet of feminine rulers.

Suffice it to say that the Rev. T. T. Hobday had for six months settled down in the quiet village, and had as yet trodden upon the toes of no one in the place, nor preached anything but the mildest of sermons from the three-decker pulpit in the church.

CHAPTER II.

THE register of the church and parish of Staunton was a curious old volume, kept as irregular as most of those old registry books were wont to be kept in the slipshod days before registration was made a matter of importance.

This volume attracted the attention of the Rev. Thomas Tompkins Hobday by reason of the quaint notes and remarks which a former rector of the place, ruling the village in the days of King Charles of merry memory, had made relative to certain of the parishioners whose deaths or marriages were recorded therein.

The good old rector, whose sympathies were evidently strongly upon the royal side of the question then so lately in dispute, had thought fit to enter against the record of a certain Miles Holdfast the words, "Ye same was a righte pestilente roundhead." Again, against the death of a certain Alice Shortcake, spinster, one found his cramped hand recording, "Poor thinge, knew her of a child; faire of face, but frail. Rest her soul!" And of a couple whose marriage stood on the leaf, "Glade to marry them—that was time to." A certain Boniface, who we may assume had belonged in life to the king's party, was now set down by the rector as "An honest man, loved his kinge—loved his ale, too. Owed me thirteen shillings, but I forgive it him." And so on through the ancient volume, as long as this worthy old rector had served the parish, were to be found these little notes of his verdict upon the men and women of his time. Whether the Rev. Thomas Tompkins Hobday had some intention of making up an article for any local print, or as a trifle for "Sylvanus Urban," I know not, but he took the register into his rooms and commenced one night to take extracts therefrom.

It was a wet, windy evening about the middle of December. The lodging with its outlook upon the gravestones, and its proximity to the grey church, assumed, as the shades of night gradually crept down, a more and more lonesome aspect. To make matters worse, the curate's fire had died down from neglect to its embers, and the flames of the two candles he used were blown to and fro now and again by the short, anxious puffs of wind that came round the church tower into the latticed window before which he had seated himself.

His careful landlady had gone out and he was

alone. He had turned over a few pages in search of a certain entry which had attracted his attention in the church vestry the day before, when a dreadful thing happened to him.

Suddenly he felt in his left hand, with which he was holding down the pages as he turned them over with his right, a most curious sensation, something like a faint electric shock; this extended up his arm to his shoulder, and at the same time a cold breeze seemed to pass over his cheek and forehead. At the same moment he noticed that the two flames of the candles had become of a most ghastly and unnatural blue. Startled and trembling, his eye fell upon the left-hand corner of the volume which he held, and there he saw—a something, at first shapeless, indescribable, but which gradually, slowly shaped itself into the likeness of a large, waxen, livid hand—the hand of a man—a large, sinewy hand, with the forefinger stretched out, as if pointing to the page of the register.

Even in the intense terror which seized him, even in the short space which suffered him to spring from his chair and to fly to the furthest corner of his small room, he noticed a something peculiar, as of the mark of a large excrescence, at the base of the outstretched forefinger—a wart, in fact; but as he gazed in abject and silent terror, his hair bristling upon his head, and the clammy perspiration standing out upon his forehead, the hand gradually faded away, the candles resumed their wonted brightness, and all was as it had been.

Recovering, as if from a spell, and carefully avoiding book or table, the curate rushed from the room. Down the few stairs he fled into the little hall, and mechanically catching his hat from the peg upon which it hung, he passed into the open air.

"Lor! Mr. Hobday, how you frightened me!" Thus Mrs. Marby, against whom, returning home under the cover of an ancient umbrella, the terror-stricken curate had plunged in his frantic haste to escape from the abode of terror.

"I beg pardon! Hope I did no hurt! I am not—not quite well, and thought a walk—And—if I should not come home to-night don't be alarmed; I may stay out! Good night!"

With these broken sentences, Mr. Hobday pursued his way down the gusty road, leaving his landlady stricken stiff with amazement, not unmingled with some fear for the sanity of her clerical lodger.

"I'm afraid of 'em," she said. "Sometimes they get that queer with reading and 'Pussey-iteisms,' and the like, and they fall in love and never tell it, and goes off their heads quietly. Yes, I'm used to 'em, but—I never!"

And with this, good Mrs. Marby closed her umbrella and restored her countenance from the startled stare which it had worn to its usual state of placid inanity, and entered her dwelling.

Her astonishment was by no means abated when, on going up to the curate's room, she saw that his candles had been left to flare themselves away, and that one of the chairs was tilted up against the wall, and a few books which had lain upon the seat thereof had been thrown upon the floor, all of which the curate, without knowing it, had caused in his spring from the haunted register to the corner of the room.

"Ah!" she said, "he's had a struggle. I read about what's-his-name—Luther; he had a struggle in his room, and threw the inkpot at Satan! Poor fellow!"

Whether the words of commiseration related to the old Protestant hero, to the modern curate, or to the person of the regions below, Mrs. Marby did not have occasion to explain; but, blowing out the neglected candles and setting the chair and the books in their places, she left the room and descended to her own private part of the small establishment.

Meanwhile, what of the Rev. Thomas Tompkins Hobday?

He had hurried on through the gusty and rainy night till he reached the furthest end of the village before he had given a thought to the questions—where was he going? and what did he intend to do?

When, however, he arrived at the dim barns and ricks of the farmhouses which formed the outpost of the village of Staunton on the great north road, he stopped, took breath, and considered.

Back to his lodgings? Oh, no! he would not enter that room of his this night for a decent rectory. He was not sure if even a deanery would tempt him. But what to do? Ah! he would go away in the morning by train somewhere—anywhere, and think matters over—there was a railway station about a mile from the village, and half way between the two was an old-fashioned roomy inn that had once been doing a thriving business, in the days when coaches were working vehicles and not merely a means of providing gentlemen and ladies with pleasure trips. These two facts of the railway station and the inn proved quite a blessing to the errant curate; for now he had time to think over his rapid and extraordinary flight he was not a little ashamed, and a good deal puzzled where to sleep that night. His sense of shame would not permit him to ask his friend, the surgeon, for a bed, or allow him to crave one at the rectory. He could, however, under pretence of going by the early train, about 6.30 in the morning, sleep at the inn, giving as his excuse that he was desirous of being called early, and fearful, if he slept at home, of losing the train.

The resolution was taken at once. He would go to the inn, dispatch a few lines by "Boots" to his landlady, who would send him the few things he required, and, before light next morning, he would go off to Sheffield.

Rather a cowardly thing to do, Mr. Hobday, to run away from what might only have been the work of a disordered stomach acting upon the organs of vision!

What would be the opinion of the Misses Shrimpton, and of the stern Mrs. Entwistle? What of the doctor? What would the parish think of him? He didn't know, and he didn't care; sleep in that house and run the risk of seeing again that horrible phantom hand was what he would not and durst not do.

Round, ruby-faced Mrs. Sattercliffe, at the "Swan," was rather astonished at the curate's demand for a bed, but his explanation and his evident wish not to disturb his landlady, coupled with his desire on no account to lose the early train, were quite enough to satisfy her, so she set about preparing a bedchamber, and the "Boots" took a written order to his home for a black bag with sundry indispensable articles packed therein.

Judge of the consternation, picture to yourself the shock which fell upon the quiet rectory first, and then upon the whole village of Staunton, when, in two days time, a letter arrived to say that the curate had thrown up his appointment, had left the place, and sent his landlady her money, having ordered his goods and chattels to be dispatched after him!

Such was the history of the Rev. T. T. Hobday, before he became "our new curate."

CHAPTER III.

In our town we flattered ourselves that we knew something about politics, ecclesiastical history, things in general, and church services in particular.

We had two beautiful new churches, and services after the most approved florid patterns. There was no mould and no neglect as at Staunton; our church bells were for ever going, and we had festivals on this saint's day and on that, and vigils and fasts and other observances about which the folk of far-off Staunton knew nothing.

One of our curates at St. Tobias' Church had married a lord's daughter and obtained a living, and we were informed that on next Sunday our new curate would arrive.

He arrived, and, behold! Thomas Tompkins Hobday was the man. We saw him and heard him preach, and we came to the conclusion that he was bashful and Low Church.

All this was soon changed, however. He was

taken in hand. Here, as in Staunton, he had to be instructed by our ladies as to what he should do and what he should preach; and what were the proper colours and decorations for this season and that season, and this feast and the other. Our town was not a large one, but it was, and we flatter ourselves is, a very lively one. Certainly, Thomas Tompkins Hobday had no excuse for feeling dull or in want of occupation; for curates are always made happy in Claypole. He had innumerable tea-fights to attend, and not a few young ladies to convey home after the croquet parties or the archery meetings, for we were great in archery, and our young ladies thought the dress becoming and the attitudes graceful.

Our vicar was a big, lively man, who showed his great white teeth as much as he could, and laughed at his own jokes. Under his care, T. T. Hobday became a fair specimen of a High Church cleric, and shaved off his sandy, incipient down and his thin whiskers, to harmonize with the band which had replaced his tie and the cassock in which he pattered about the schools and in the garden of his lodgings.

This brings us to his abode. Quite another sort of place to the grim, mullioned house by Staunton churchyard; quite a lively home, with a widow lady at the head of it, and three fair daughters to constitute its body.

Our curate was, from the moment in which he drank his first cup of breakfast cocoa in the house of Mrs. Pawley and her three daughters, transplanted into a new soil and surrounded with quite other conditions of growth.

Thomas Tompkins Hobday was not at all slow to accommodate himself to the new soil, and, so to speak, began to flourish therein.

Mrs. Pawley herself was a stout woman without creases; time seemed to have passed very lightly over her comely countenance, and to have left her plump, white hands altogether untouched. She had been a widow for some years, and lived upon an annuity which had been purchased for her by her father, who, however, had died in difficulties after having made this salutary provision.

Her own husband had been unable to leave more than what sufficed to yield his three daughters the sum of fifty pounds a year between them; and so they had decided that in their little house there was room for a gentleman who liked a respectable home and good society.

The eldest Miss Pawley was of the stereotyped class of High Church young ladies of thirty or thereabouts, and, being of sound principles, you may be sure that the census-paper did not in any way mislead the British public as to her age. If she said she was thirty you might well depend upon it that thirty she was and no more. I am not so sure of the same rectitude of principle in the second sister, Miss Florencia Pawley.

This young lady had, as yet, no reason to be anxious as to the census-papers, or to grow nervous when at table relative ages were brought in question, for she could not number more than two-and-twenty summers, and was a bright and extremely fascinating young person.

Thomas Tompkins Hobday had, when introduced to the mamma, come to the conclusion that she was a desirable landlady, but had his fears lest she should be a little too loquacious and not leave him enough to himself. She was almost too much of a lady for a lodginghouse-keeper; he thought he should never have courage to ask her for anything, and he felt that if she were dishonestly given he should be plundered like a sheep. For the eldest Miss Pawley, with her smooth hair and rigid expression, her talk about "Tracts for the Times," and her glances at the Early Fathers, he had an unfeigned awe; for the youngest Miss Pawley, who was, in fact, a child of an unknown age, with very saucy brown eyes, and whom he suspected of laughing at him behind his back, he took a sudden dislike.

Altogether, he was not quite sure whether the rooms would suit him—whether they were not rather far from the station, and from St. Tobias' Church; but—here entered the second Miss Pawley, and the matter was done. Mr. Hobday fell in a moment a victim, and agreed to pay half

a crown a week more than he had resolved to pay for any lodging under the sun.

So he and his chattels were installed at No. 3, Myrtle Villas.

For a short time he kept decorously to his own rooms, and only gave a tiny bow as he passed the elder lady and her first and youngest daughters, and a more timid obeisance, coupled with a large blush, when he happened to cross the path of the bewitching Miss Florence.

By little and little, from furtive moments of sitting or standing in the ladies' parlour upon this or that pretence, he came gradually to find himself passing not a few of his evenings there.

It was so lonely in his own room. The elder Miss Pawley was able so nicely to coach him up in plain song, and really knew more about St. Eusebius and St. Polycarp than he did. The mother had recognized his talent for whist, and had asked him now and then to take a friendly hand when one or two of those old ladies whom the youngest Miss Pawley designated improperly as "tabbies" happened to drop in for tea and a talk.

Then Miss Florence had discovered that he had an artistic turn, and there were wonderful consultations as to sketches which she had made in a wishy-washy sort of way, and even expeditions planned, after a while, in which he should give her a few quiet hints as to effect of light and shadow, etc., etc.

So, gradually, for even curates' hearts are not of adamant, our curate began to find the society of Miss Florence the most desirable thing, on the whole, that life had hitherto presented to him, and to enjoy his lodgings amazingly.

If persons who are reduced to keep apartments for single gentlemen are wise, they will take care to secure the permanency of their inmates by keeping a stock of Miss Florence on hand.

Love, when once kindled in a curate's heart, proceeds with rapid, not to say gigantic, strides. You could not, save at a terrible cost, have bribed the young cleric to leave his abode in the bosom of the Pawley family, in which, after six months, he was more like a member than a person who paid in part for the bread-and-butter consumed by the Pawley people.

Mrs. Pawley, of course, had an eye towards an engagement and a wedding-cake in the future, and was by no means slack in throwing opportunities for converse in the young people's way.

The Rev. Thomas Tompkins Hobday fell deeper and deeper into the snare, and even in the performance of his clerical duties his eyes constantly wandered in the direction of the seat where Miss Florence sat, with downcast eyes and a pretty constant blush upon her fair cheeks; and on every possible occasion the curate was to be seen walking side by side with his fair enslaver to and from the sacred edifice.

The rector noticed this, and grinned; the rector's wife also noticed it, and turned up her nose; furthermore, the rector's eldest daughter, a marriageable maiden, also noticed it, and grew morose and sour. Such are the evils wrought by eligible curates with sandy hair in a small town.

The curate determined to assail the maiden's heart, and was only deterred from the attempt by a dread of what his lady mother, who was, she said, descended from somebody who had done something or somebody in remote ages, and had been made a baronet, would say to her darling boy's marriage with a lodginghouse woman's daughter.

When that period of intimacy had arrived at which people begin to tell each other of their families, of their connections and belongings, he learnt from Miss Florence that there was in the family that valuable possession, an incipient law-suit. It seemed that a certain rather large property in the north of England belonged, or ought to belong, to Mrs. Pawley—a property quite large enough to take them for ever and a day out of the category of lodginghouse people, and to set them in the paradise of double drawing-rooms and one-horse broughams, four o'clock teas and garden-parties. Mrs. Pawley discoursed

at length upon this interesting subject, and the curate soon became quite enthusiastic.

It appeared that a distant relative of Mrs. Pawley's had died, worth a considerable sum of money, intestate, and that, hearing of this fact, she had claimed the money. A lawyer in the town of some little ability had undertaken to see her rights established, on the strength of which she had promised him a fair slice of the cake when it should come. So the lawyer worked hard, and made a search here and a search there, and accumulated quite a fine collection of the certificates of the marriage, death, and baptism of the relatives, male and female, of Mrs. Pawley's forbears.

For three years the matter had gone on; and poor Mrs. Pawley's thoughts and those of her daughters had been filled with thoughts of luxury and happiness, and then lowered into the deepest depths of despondency. It was necessary, to establish this claim, that the proof of marriage of a certain great-grandfather should be produced, and this, in spite of all searching, was not forthcoming.

So, after the flattering season of hope in which Mrs. Pawley had all but ordered the brougham, on the idea of which she dwelt, to be built for her, despair reigned triumphant over the Pawley household. The eldest Miss Pawley devoted herself more assiduously than ever to the Early Fathers and the study of "Tracts for the Times"; Mrs. Pawley wiped her eyes and laid out her lodger nets with care; Miss Florence, whose despair—she having had visions of unlimited dresses, and perhaps a husband with a handle to his name—had, perhaps, been the most keen of them all, soon renewed her amiles and her gaiety; and the youngest sister of a period of tears recovered her kitten-like vivacity.

But the curate had to be told of all this—how the curate had been accused in search of this missing link, but in vain; how the lawyer himself had despaired at last, become the sowing, random habits of the ancestor were tolerably well known, and it was just "on the cards" that he had never sought the church's blessing upon any union which he had formed.

Surely no lodger ever took so much interest in the legal matters of his landlady as the Rev. Thomas Tompkins did in those belonging to his hostess. He had long and anxious conversations with her upon the subject, and the fair Florence's fluttering heart whispered to her (if hearts can whisper, which I take leave to doubt) that she was not very remotely the cause of the awakened interest in this particular law-suit.

The curate went further; he sought out the solicitor, who was a gentleman, and a courteous one, but particularly dry and unsympathetic, and who explained that all which could be done had long since been tried, but that the chance of discovering this particular missing marriage certificate was, in his opinion, no chance at all.

"Let me have a note of the particular circumstances which you wish to establish," said the curate; "not from curiosity merely, I can assure you, but I may chance to help you in some way."

"Oh! certainly you may—but its rather unlikely."

But the curate carried off the particulars, in his pocket-book.

One evening—an eventful evening for the curate and Miss Florence, for he had been for more than half an hour holding her fair head against the top button of his "M.B." waistcoat, and, in the absence of her mamma and sister, he had told his love for her, and she had not repulsed him—a singular discovery took place.

From talking of love in the abstract and enjoying it in the concrete, they got upon the subject of what might have been had the law-suit turned out as was wished and hoped; and then Miss Florence began to tell some traits she had heard of in the rough, boisterous ancestor whose marriage certificate was wanting.

"I can give you an idea of what the fellow was like," she said; "for there is an oil-painting, without a frame, of him put away in the box-room. He was no beauty, and it is a horrid daub; but still, you shall see it."

So saying, she left her lover and ran upstairs in search of the picture.

She entered the room again, bearing with her one of those hideous oil half-lengths in which the pre-photographic artists were accustomed, for a guinea or two, to depict our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers—pictures in which we see those old ladies with frills and big white caps, with gold watch and chain conspicuously shown upon a background of black satin; or elderly gentlemen with smirking countenances and black hair, flourishing in buff waistcoats, with a view of the landscape over their right shoulders, and an inkstand in front of them, shirt-pin and watch-chain also carefully painted—the jewellery, in fact, being more patent and successful than the facial expression of the subject.

Having dusted the florid old gentleman whom she carried, for he required dusting, she set him upright upon a chair in front of the curate, and then sat down again by her lover's side upon the sofa which she had vacated.

"That is old Mr. Sharker," she said.

"Oh, that's old Sharker, is it? What a queer old boy! Not a gentleman, I fear—eh?"

But here the curate's voice failed him, and he continued gazing upon the portrait with absorbing interest, his countenance becoming first as pale as parchment, and then flushing with a sudden rush of colour.

What had he seen? Why this: On the right hand of the deceased gentleman—a particularly large and ugly hand, by the way—and near the base of the forefinger, which was thrust into the waistcoat, was a GREAT WAX OR EXCRESCENCE, exactly the same as that he had seen on that dreadful, dreadful night, which he so often tried, but in vain, to wipe out from his memory.

He stared at the picture with such an agonized expression of countenance, that at last Miss Florence almost feared for her clerical lover's reason, and inquired more tenderly than was perhaps necessary if he were ill. Shaking off his stupor, and resolved to get as soon as possible in his own room, there to think over in private the ideas which were awaiting him, he made some excuse for withdrawing rather abruptly from the society of his beloved, and crept upstairs silent and excited.

No rest that night for our clerical friend—no rest for two or three nights after.

A wild and fixed idea had taken possession of him, and would not be shaken off. There was undoubtedly some connection between the spectre hand in his lodgings at Staunton and the portrait of Miss Florence's great-grandfather. Night after night, as he lay speechless, he pondered over the matter, and night after night he screwed his courage to the sticking point of a very dreadful trial which he had fully resolved to make.

Not a word to his hostess; not a word to Florence, who really was much alarmed at the change, quite inexplicable to her, in the manner of her lover; not a word to rector or friends. The next Christmas Eve was drawing near, and he resolved to go down to Staunton to make a search in the Register Book, which he had taken into his lodgings that eventful night, and if he should find that which he was in search for, what a joyous return he should have, and what a happy life hereafter he should lead!

It needed some little courage, though, for he was as much afraid of that particular Register Book as if it were a fish torpedo, ready at a touch to cover him with an explosion of spectral hands and ghastly wens.

However, he packed up his bag one morning and set off for Staunton.

Need I say how anxiously his heart went pat-a-pat as station after station came and passed, and he drew nearer and nearer to the touch of his destiny?

But at York he lost his train, and was detained for a couple of hours. This delay would enable him to get to Staunton, as he thought, with a shiver, in the dusk, and not as he had fondly hoped, in the honest light of day. However, his courage was screwed up to the proper



[THE SAME GREAT LIVID HAND, WITH THE OUTSTRETCHED FOREFINGER AND THE WEN AT THE BASE OF IT.]

point, and for Florencia's sake he would not shrink.

It was, indeed, more than dusk when he reached the village of which he was formerly the curate; it was rapidly growing dark.

Poor Thomas Tompkins felt this, and trembled in anticipation of his search. Screwing his courage up with a desperate effort, he made for the clerk's house, and, in company with that grey-headed official and a tallow candle, entered the vestry of the church.

The astonishment of the old man at this sudden appearance of the former curate was genuine enough, but he took it all as a matter of business, and, having set the candle and the Register Book on the table, he, much to the curate's fright, went in search of another candle. Our clerical friend, feeling himself left thus alone with the great shadow of the vestry furniture about him, and a look-out through the half-opened door into the dim aisle of the church, felt, in spite of himself, all his courage "oozing out of his finger ends." A thought of Florencia nerved him once more, and without daring to look to the right or the left, he opened the books and commenced his search. His trembling fingers turned over page after page of the musty old book, and his eyes rapidly sought the wished-for entry. How fervently he wished the clerk would come back! The old man, however, was long away. Surely candles must be scarce in the village, or someone had met and detained him.

The clock struck with a clang that caused him nearly to leap from his chair, and he fancied that his one candle was somehow changing colour. Would that old man never come back?

He had got to the year, and was repeating to himself, "John Halsted to Sarah Entwistle," when suddenly the same electric sort of a thrill he had before experienced struck his arm, and then again—horror of horrors!—at the top of the page was the same great livid hand, with the outstretched forefinger and the wen at the base of it!

He sat as if rooted to the chair. His hair

rose upon his head; the great drops of sweat stood upon his brow; his heart all but ceased to beat; he felt his senses failing him!

At that moment he heard footsteps; the hand grew paler and paler and faded away; and the clerk entered with another candle and a profuse apology for his absence.

The curate made a supreme effort to control himself, and looked at the page of the Register.

There, sure enough, was the entry.

"John Sharker, master mariner, bachelor, and Sarah Entwistle, spinster"—the date, their ages, the names of the rustic witness who had long ago witnessed the wedding.

He made a note, and bespoke a formal copy of the important item; and then feeling the parish clerk, and asking a few hurried questions after the rector and the doctor and other old friends, whom, however, he said he was not going to visit, he made a precipitate exit, and finding by his watch that he had just time to catch a late train back to York, he tore along like a man possessed and rent by conflicting emotions of fear, delight, hope, and bewilderment, and the intoxication of success.

I really scarcely need say any more. The finding of the missing register did all. The property was recovered, the lawyer had his slice of the legal cake, and also a slice of another cake, with a coating of sugar at the top; and this, of course, was the wedding cake of Miss Florencia Pawley and the Reverend Thomas Tompkins Hobday, not then curate of Claypole, but the recently-inducted rector of a Lincolnshire parish.

Miss Pawley the elder looks through brighter spectacles upon life, and has her own maid. So has her mamma, and a one-horse brougham and a villa at Surbiton to boot, and is mighty fond of her son-in-law, and a stately person among the poor.

THE principal industry of Egypt—the manufacture of rags—will not be interfered with by a war.

THE LAST SONG.

Must it be? Then farewell,
Thou whom my woman's heart cherished so long:

Farewell, and be this song
The last, wherein I say, "I loved thee well!"

Many a weary strain
(Never yet heard by thee) hath this poor breath
Uttered of love and death
And maiden grief, hidden and chid in vain.

Oh! if, in after years,
The tale that I am dead shall touch thy heart,
Bid not the pain depart.

But shed o'er my grave a few sad tears!

Think of me, still so young,
Silent though fond, who cast my life away,
Daring to disobey

The passionate Spirit that around me clung.

Farewell again! And yet
Must it indeed be so, and on this shore
Shall you and I no more

Together see the sun of the summer set?

Never; for soon the wind
Will waft your bark over the Biscay foam,
Far from your early home,

Your friends—and can you leave us, then,
behind?

For me—my days are gone.
No more shall I, in vintage times, prepare
Chaplets to bind my hair,

As I was wont: oh! 'twas for you alone.

But on my bier I'll lay
Me down in frozen beauty, pale and wan,
Martyr of love to man,

And, like a broken flower, gently decay.

"MOTHER, what have people got noses for?"
asked a child of her mother who had seen better
days. "To turn up at poor folks, my child,"
was the cynical response.



[THE GHASTLY FACE, WITH ITS GLARING, SIGHTLESS EYES, UPTURNED TO THE SOLEMN SKY.]

A MYSTERY OF THE ILE ST. LOUIS.

By THE ÉDITOR.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

THE Paris of to-day is not the Paris we have in view as we glance back at it in connection with a story which we are about to tell.

It is a dirtier and less healthy Paris, a city of narrower thoroughfares and older-fashioned houses, but it is the Paris of French history, in which nearly every street has its traditional memories, some grim and bloody enough to make you shudder at their recollection, some grotesquely awful, some sadly provocative of pathetic, tenderly sympathetic sentiments and feelings.

But even then the Ile St. Louis, reached by crossing the old suspension bridge, was a quiet, uneventful, secluded place, without a history, with lofty, old-fashioned houses, and narrow, deserted-looking streets, where bustle and noise were not, where vehicles were few and foot-passengers scarce, where the shops were hard to be found, and when found appeared to be customerless, where commerce was unknown, in which one was tempted to express utter un-

belief in the existence of its seven or eight thousand, or more, inhabitants, asking—Where can they be?

The rue St. Louis traversed it lengthways, and even at noon its air of complete repose and quietude was like that of night.

The houses had that air of respectability without wealth which is suggestive of calmness and content. Their window-blinds looked faded and worn, but clean and neat, the paint old but well-washed, and if their fronts were little more than flat, plain walls, pierced with narrow, right-angled orifices, without even balconies to break up the architectural monotony, they were in perfect keeping with the stolid, solid, unemotional character of the entire Ile.

If this was the aspect of the Ile by day, guess how intensely silent, lonely, and deserted it became when the night fell and the little twinkling stars looked down into its narrow streets, in which the darkness was so thick that the gas-lamps failed to penetrate it and burned in little patches of murky gloom of the most circumscribed diameter.

So the stars looked down upon the Ile on the night of April 16th, 1848.

Into one of the narrowest and darkest of these streets, on which most of the houses had their backs turned—a street with a marchand de vins and a small café at the corners of one end, a mere by-way, turns the driver of one of the shabbiest of shabby voitures de place. He drives very slowly, and has an air of listening

for some dreaded sound. His eyes glance furtively from left to right, or backward or forward. And presently he stops, and where he stops remains, perfectly motionless and silent, as if both he and the worn-out military charger he drives had fallen into a sound sleep.

Eighteen forty-eight, you will remember, was a French revolution year—a year which brought thousands to ruin, a year in which rich men became poor, and poor men were reduced to beggary, and beggars starved—which brought misery to hundreds of happy homes and hearts, and violent deaths to thousands.

And in this month of April the air was full of sinister and alarming rumours. People spoke in whispers of another Reign of Terror; secret societies were planning wholesale slaughter; and, drifting here and there, the "blousards" dealt in significant hints of savage doings in the streets when the Executive Commission and the National Assembly would be powerless to restrain them.

The old hackney-coach had been standing in the darkness and gloom quite half an hour, when three men, moving like shadows, so dark, so silent, so noiseless, were they, approached slowly the corner of the street, and, after remaining for some minutes in a group at the café corner, without speaking but listening and watching, two of them slowly approached the vehicle, opened its door, and drew from it what seemed to be the lifeless body of a man, with the fragment of a rope about its neck!

They placed it in the middle of the narrow street or lane, just beyond a patch of lamplight, stretched out upon its back, the ghastly face, with its glaring, sightless eyes, upturned to the twinkling stars and the solemn sky.

Then the coachman silently dismounted, and one of the shadowy forms, taking his place, drove slowly on. When the wheels of the vehicle were no longer heard, the coachman and one man returned to the door of the café, where the third man had been keeping watch, and then all three walked slowly back the way they had come.

The man who remained alone by the corpse, taking a key from his pocket, advanced, glancing apprehensively around as he moved, to the low wall of one of those sombre houses which turned its back upon the lane. Here was a low iron-bound door, which he opened, revealing beyond it a small, desolate-looking, neglected garden, wildly overgrown with tall weeds and grass.

Holding the fragment of rope about the neck of the corpse tightly in both hands, he dragged it through this door, which he at once closed and re-locked, into this garden, and there concealed it under some bushes, which, unrest and untroubled, struggled in every direction, thickly.

This done, he looked upward, noting carefully every window overlooking the spot. All were dark. Then selecting the blackest shadows on one side of the little garden, he moved quickly through them towards the house, descending rapidly a flight of stone steps to the basement, where he unlocked a small side door and entered, leaving, as he noiselessly closed and re-locked it, a deep, long sigh of relief.

Within the house all was still; it appeared to be both uninhabited and unfurnished. Ascending the stairs, he made his way to a back room at the top, from the window of which he obtained a view of the garden and the narrow street behind it.

There he remained, sleepless and watchful, never removing his eyes from the view without until the first gleam of returning day appeared. Then he stealthily left the house by its front door.

CHAPTER II.

Some days after the night on which our story opened great consternation was created by the discovery and identification of the body concealed with such elaborate precautions in the garden of the empty house at the back of the rue St. Louis, a house which had been placarded "To be let or sold" for the previous twelve months or more.

The discovery came about in this manner.

M. Coshorn, a prosperous merchant, thought of taking the house, and one day he brought his wife and her mother with him to inspect it as their new home.

Naturally enough they went into the little garden behind, where M. Coshorn, while describing plans for laying out and improving it, carelessly pushed aside the straggling bush with his stick, and so laid bare the awful sight which it concealed.

The wife recognised the body at a glance, and with such a shriek of horror as no one who heard it could ever forget. They carried her senseless into the house. For, strange to say, the body was that of M. Cavé, a former lover of hers, and one with whom her name had of late been slanderously associated in many a coarse joke, and amidst much laughter, at her husband's expense.

The event created intense excitement.

It was soon publicly known that M. Cavé, when a young art-student, had courted the very lady by whom his dead body was first accidentally discovered, that he would have been her husband if her parents had not compelled her to marry the wealthy M. Coshorn, whom it was hinted she detested.

Police investigations soon dragged into light new facts.

It was in consequence of the young lady's marriage with a rival that M. Cavé had left France for Belgium, where he practised as a sculptor for some years.

After his return, he began to meet his old love in society, and awakened her husband's jealousy.

Stories soon began to circulate affecting the honour of the lady, and it was said that although M. Cavé had never admitted their truthfulness, on the other hand he did not deny it.

In some quarters it had been said that a duel arranged between the husband and the lover would have come off on the day following that of the latter's sudden disappearance.

It was also shown that M. Coshorn returned, early on the morning of April 17th, the keys of the empty house, which he had borrowed from the owner of the property on April 15th, the day before the sculptor left his studio in the Quartier Latin never to return. It was shown in various ways that the body must have been where it was found some few days.

M. Coshorn denied both the story of his jealousy and that of the duel. He had himself invited M. Cavé to visit his wife, and the last time he saw him was in the garden of his own house on the evening of the 16th of April, a fact which was confirmed by the statements of his wife and servants.

There was no evidence of the artist having been seen by any person after he left Madame Coshorn, and people smiled when that blushing lady reluctantly admitted that M. Cavé did not return with her to the house after their conversation in the garden, but went away out of a private door in the garden wall, which she also admitted was little known and very seldom used.

The artist's studio was in the Quartier Latin, Madame Coshorn resided in the rue Castellane; her ex-lover was probably slain after leaving her on the evening of the 16th, and on the 23rd of the month she found his remains in the garden of the empty residence near the rue Saint Louis.

It was a terrible mystery from the very first, and a mystery it remained to the last—awfully suggestive, painfully complicated. That M. Coshorn had any motive for murdering the sculptor was suggested, but not proved. That he had ever visited the empty house or its garden before he took his wife into it, there was nothing to show conclusively. Nothing had been taken from the body, and therefore, robbery did not appear to be the object of the murderers; and that more than one, or even two, had been concerned in the crime was shown by the manner of death—the victim had been strangled with a rope, part of which was found with the body; his clothes appeared to have been torn, and his mouth, limbs, and body terribly bruised in a desperate struggle.

Nothing came of the affair but a terrible suspicion, which clung with the pertinacity of a nightmare to M. Coshorn and his beautiful wife. The old house they were about to take continued unlet and achieved the reputation of being haunted.

Madame Coshorn had never professed love for her husband. She took him as so many of her countrywomen do take their life-partners, because it had been so arranged by her parents.

After the murder it was known that they lived together most unhappily. Each dreaded the presence of the other, and shunned it.

He passed his time amongst his account-books—formal, stern, reserved, suspicious, and severe. She passed her time paying and receiving visits amongst such of her friends as had not fallen away from her after the sculptor's death.

The name of M. Cavé was never mentioned by either the one or the other.

CHAPTER III.

The month of July had come. The month of revolutions!

It was on the 9th of July, 1830, that Switzerland threw off the yoke of Austria; in July, on the 26th, in the year 1581, Holland arose in arms against the government of Spain; our own revolutionary battle of the Boyne was fought in July, 1690; in July, America achieved her independence; in July, 1789, the flag of

liberty surmounted the Bastille; on the last day of July, 1830, Charles X. signed the death-warrant of his dynasty; and now, lastly, it is in this month, in this year 1842, that the House of Orleans is destined to be overthrown.

The roar of mobs ever increasing in strength and violence; the tramp of troops marching heavily in large bodies through the streets; the heavy rumble and surly clang of artillery in motion; the sharp rattle of musketry; the distant booming of the cannonade; the glare of torches; the crashing of stone-laden carts depositing their loads of paving-stones where the sharp stroke of axe and mattock ring out as the barricades arise to the exultant shouts of "Vive le peuple!" or the fiercer cries of "A bas le gouvernement!" and the wild-beast savageness of shouts more frequent than either, "Mort aux tyrans!"

These were the sounds which made Paris a place of dread and terror in the sunshine and warmth of that memorable July.

A strong barricade had arisen close beside the new house in which the Coshorns resided, just where the rue Louis Philippe intersected the rue de la Roquette. It was protected by a deep trench.

The windows of this house, which was a massive, lofty building, commanded a complete view of the Place de la Bastille and of the different streets and boulevards converging upon it. All day long it witnessed the hurried preparations for struggle and carnage, order against disorder, government against anarchy. And now the fighting had commenced.

In a small, richly furnished and elegant saloon on the premier of this house, sat Madame Coshorn and her husband. On the table before them stood costly fruits and viands amidst beautiful flowers. Both man and woman were flushed and angry; both had partaken rather too freely. They quarrelled constantly, and they are quarrelling again.

"I was never deceived," she said. "I always knew that you were the real source of all the woe and wretchedness I have secretly endured; and if I can ever prove that he was slain by your hand, mine will point you out to the eye of justice, so sure as you stand there a living man!"

"If ever!" he echoes with a bitter laugh, and turning upon her fiercely, he says, "You deceived me and played me false, and he was your tempter. You conspired between you to make me the laughing-stock of half Paris—sac-r-r-re!"

"And for that you and your hideous brothers hanged him! You were afraid to meet him in fair fight, like a man and a gentleman—you preferred to play the hangman's part; you and your vile cowardly brothers—I know it as well as if I had been there and seen the crime committed. Not one of them has ever looked me honestly in the eyes since the man I loved was slain!"

Madame Coshorn was a tall, majestic woman, with a noble figure and a lovely face; eyes large and full of fire; the mouth of a Venus; a voice full of sweetness and richness; hair dark and glossy as the raven's wing.

Monsieur Coshorn was much older than Madame, a small-made, slender man, short of stature, with grey hair and a little, white, plump hand, the taper fingers of which were covered with costly rings. The curves of his small, effeminate mouth were hard and cruel; his eyes were fierce and suspicious—full of revengeful threatening.

"Mort de ma vie!" he exclaimed, "you try my patience! I don't think it will last, Madame Coshorn. I wonder that you are not more afraid of me, Madame Coshorn, thinking of me as you do," and then, lowering his voice, he hissed savagely, "If I am he who hanged your lover, I might readily poison you!"

"Poison! It is the terror of my life. I dream of it; it haunts me day and night. I have told all my friends that some day I shall provoke you so that you will poison me, and I know that you will do it, watchful as I am against you. But of this be sure, the cause of my death will have to be clearly shown—there

will be, no evading that—you will not escape the law a second time!"

As she spoke she raised her newly filled glass to her feverish lips and drained it dry.

Her husband went sullenly to the windows and said, presently:

"We must close the iron shutters and go to the back of the house, madame. The National Guards and the Garde Mobile are nearing us—the insurgents are retreating."

As he spoke the distant rattling of musketry grew louder.

"If they should be driven back," he said, "they will make a desperate stand here; it is not safe to remain."

"But it is impossible to fly," said she, turning pale; "the streets are choked by the dense masses of the mob!"

"At the back we shall be safe. Say, madame, shall we adjourn our word-fight, or carry it on in another room, or would you prefer that we remain here in the dark. Dare you trust yourself alone with me, your husband, here in the dark, or does your conscience—your conscience that whispers ever of the poison—make you afraid of me? Are my wrongs so great that one cruel death will not suffice for their avenging?"

"Jeer on, monsieur! you have not now to face a Monsieur Cavé."

As she spoke he leaped towards her with the spring of an infuriated tiger, his hand raised to strike.

She opposed him, erect and unshrinking, with a face of deadly whiteness and eyes like burning coals.

"Strike, coward, if you dare! Strike!" she cried.

Monsieur controlled himself with a fearful effort, which left him trembling and as white-faced as his wife.

The successive discharges of muskets now blended with the roar of the cannonade, and the sounds of the strife grew louder and louder.

Cries of dismay and terror filled the air, and the rumbling of heavy masses which every now and then fell with a dull, reverberating sound that made the house tremble, told them that the workers at the barricade were still pursuing their desperate labours with ever-increasing activity.

Monsieur Cothorn closed the shutters suddenly—they were in darkness.

"I will ring for lamps."

And then she heard in the darkness a voice which made her blood run cold—her husband's voice, saying:

"Madame, we are alone in the house; I have just seen the last servant we had with us there in the street. I will fetch a lamp myself."

She heard him feel his way to the door. He blundered as he approached the table and struck a decanter with his outstretched hand. He opened the door at last, and by the light so admitted she saw him descending the stairs.

Taking up one of the decanters from which the stopper had already been removed, she filled the largest glass on the table from it and drained it dry. Then she ran quickly across the room, closed the door, and securely locked it, saying, with a laugh:

"No, no, monsieur; I will not be left here alone with you on such a day as this."

Perhaps monsieur had some fear akin to her own, for he did not return, and she listened for his footfall expectantly, but in vain.

"I will leave her alone with them," muttered monsieur, as he escaped from the back of his house, "and if I do so long enough there is not one of them that she will not empty; and so good-bye to you, my headstrong and implacable one—my patience has gone at last—good-bye, good-bye!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Mon Dieu, madame!" cried a woman, her voice mingling with the din of the fierce conflict now raging immediately in front of the house.

"Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" she cried, and beat frantically at the door of the room within which her mistress had locked herself.

It was Antoinette, Madame Cothorn's maid.

The crash of breaking wood-work, the clatter and clash of falling glass, the smashing of roofs and windows, had failed to awaken the terrors of madame, or awakening them had killed her. There was no response. Antoinette's cries and beatings were in vain.

While she still persevered, the troops without made a last triumphant charge, and, sweeping over every obstacle, carried the last barricade at the point of the bayonet. The insurgents fled in wild confusion.

Exhausted and terrified, Antoinette sat down upon the stairs and began to cry and sob. The noises of the conflict grew more and more distant, until presently they ceased.

Again and again the lady's-maid repeated her efforts to obtain admission to the room in which she knew her mistress was still confined, for when she first approached its door she heard her groans and cries of agony. Her strength was insufficient for the task of bursting it open, and there were none to give her help.

At last she heard the trampling of feet and the noise of many wheels, and then a roar of approaching voices. The sharp rattle of musketry arose once more, and again the fearful din of conflict filled the air. This time the insurgents were victorious. They were driving the soldiers before them.

Then the outer doors were smashed in, and Antoinette sprang to her feet as the blousards swarmed into the house to occupy the windows. The door at which she had been knocking was driven in with a few blows and occupied.

The house was converted into a fortress, and they were firing from the windows, heedless of the fact that at their feet lay the beautiful form of the mistress of the house, her hands clenched, her eyes distended and bursting from the sockets, her features distorted, her body bent and rigid—dead—poisoned!

All Madame Cothorn's care had been vain.

In the darkness that followed the closing of the shutters, while he was feeling his way to the door, the revengeful husband had dropped into one of the decanters, from which but a few moments before he had himself filled a glass of the wine he and his wife had been drinking, the deadly poison which destroyed her. You ask how this became known?

Through the statements of Monsieur Cothorn, upon which this story has been based. The statements of convict number four hundred and nine, a man proved guilty of murder by the confession of his brother Franz, who in his last hour was stricken with remorse. Statements made at Toulon, transferred to paper, and duly witnessed three hours before the wretched murderer died in all the agonies of a terrible remorse.

TWILIGHT, DARKNESS AND DAWN.

By T. MEAD.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

THAT which I am about to record to you is no invention, no fiction. (The speaker is Frederic d'Arnay, a college friend, between whom and myself the bonds of affection and friendship were strong.) It is a history—my own and my wife's. Learn, then, that since our separation—since we mutually studied law together—I have been blind—not partially, but totally.

I will ask you to follow me to Switzerland. In the beautiful canton of Bâle, one summer's night, after a long day's chase, I felt broken with fatigue. My eyes had seen and admired so much of the magnificence of nature that they were dazzled; I shuddered and trembled with a bewilderment resembling a painful intoxication.

Arriving at an excellent auberge, I immediately retired, and quickly sank into a sound sleep, but not a dreamless one. My dream was a

delightful one. But, my friend, I no longer believe in the dreams of sleep; my faith is in those fair dreams which come to us when awake.

When I awoke, it was through the sudden voice of a village songster, and at first I imagined that the sun had already risen. Alas! No, my friend, the sun was yet below the mountains, and the night appeared to me most black and awful.

All at once I heard the songs of the birds which carolled in the fields, and with much anxiety I asked myself the question, "Do the birds, then, sing in the night?" I sprang from my couch hastily, and, groping my way along the wall, my hand at length came in contact with the glass of the casement, which I hastily opened; and it seemed to me that the odorous breath exhaled by the flowers of the garden was wafted to me as a tribute to my awaking, and with a singularly growing terror, my thoughts replied to my fears: the grass, the flowers, the shrubs, emit no perfume in the night!

My trembling hand sought the wall beneath my open lattice. I started! 'Twas warm to the touch.

"Can one feel the warmth of the sun when it is night?" I cried.

I called aloud, "What is the time?"

The answer came from the village clock, which just then struck the hour—twelve.

At the same instant the servant of the auberge knocked at my chamber door.

"Monsieur," she cried, "do you not want your breakfast? It is noon!"

At these words I staggered like a drunken man. I could see naught around me! Night! All was night! Burying my face between my hand, I murmured strange, confused moans. My eyes no longer were blessed with the faculty of sight, nor the relief of tears. I cast myself, face downward, prostrate upon my chamber floor, with the wild cry of anguish:

"I am blind!"

I swooned.

When I returned to life and grief, I found myself within a carriage driven rapidly along the road. A hand, small and soft enough to be that of a woman, was gently placed in mine. I had a voyage companion whom I knew not yet, and, though I saw her not, I demanded:

"Where am I?"

She answered with a voice soft as the hand I still held:

"On the road to Germany."

"To what charitable soul have I the honour now to speak, madam?"

"To the Countess Rose de —."

"But why, then, madam, have you taken pity on my misfortune?"

"Simply because you are unfortunate!"

"What goodness, madam, to a poor, humble, unknown traveller!"

"I know you sufficiently well to recognize you at the first glance. I have seen you often—very often—during the last winter amongst the visitors of our ambassador at Paris. You are named Frederic d'Arnay. If I may understand the official indications on your passport, it was your purpose to travel to Austria. Am I not right? Well, monsieur, I, too, am travelling to Vienna—back to my fatherland and family. What can be more well-timed? for we can journey together."

"Madame, alas! in travelling, what can I see?"

"Will you not, then, permit me, Monsieur Frederic, to see for you?"

I thought I must be still asleep and dreaming in my châlet; I strove to believe that the illusion of delirium which was a horrible reality. It seems to me still that I, weeping, kiss this woman's hand, so young, fair, and, without a doubt, rich, who finds nothing better on which to lavish her treasures than an unfortunate stranger—who gives of her strength to a poor, helpless patient, and devotes her bright eyesight to a poor blind sufferer like me!

We travelled by short and easy stages. The Countess Rose was a rare and marvellous Antigone. It did not suffice to her, my friend, to protect, to serve, and guide me, but she even strove to console and cheer me by all sorts of

amiable distractions, which must greatly have taxed her spirits and complaisance.

Almost all the friendships of this life bring their chagrins to us without relieving us of any of our own; but it was not so for me with my new friend and admirable *compagnon de voyage*. There must have been much weariness and trial in the constant tête-à-tête with a blind companion, but never aught of weariness or annoyance or melancholy escaped from heart or lips. I could divine by a sort of second sight that her constant smile was on me; I could trace her smile in her words; she found the means to give a duplicate vision to the extinct sight of one struck with the curse of darkness, she regarded the heavens and earth to bring before my mental gaze the marvels of which she recounted to me the beauty and magnificence.

Approaching the end of our journey, thanks to the divine bounty of a guardian angel, I dared to say to my sister, friend, protectress:

"Madam, since we invalids are veritably spoilt children, who must ever be pitied and never punished, let me, without fear, address to you a question which seems almost a folly."

"I do not think I should regard it so," said she.

I continued my impertinence by seeking with mine the countess's hand, which she graciously gave me.

"Madam, I know that you are witty, for constantly you exert your intelligence and vivacity for my advantage. I know also that you are rich, for, as I may say, you scatter your gold and silver broadcast on the dust of the high road. I know that you are noble, for you do honour to one of the fairest and most honourable names in Germany. I know that you are good, excellent, devoted, sublime; I am the living proof. I know, in short, that lately you wore the mourning weeds of widowhood; you have deigned to speak to me in your soft, gentle voice of your lost husband, but that which I know not, and would fain know, for I am curious and indiscreet—in brief, I am a Frenchman. Madam, you comprehend—I am guessing my meaning, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, I both guess and comprehend, and I counsel you to wait for a woman's confidence when the question is her age."

"And when it is a question of her beauty?"

"One judges by the sight."

"How are the blind to judge?"

"Seek to know without beholding. Is there no other test?"

"Yes, one I am about to make."

My presumptuous hand, guided by a mysterious inward light, was placed audaciously upon her forehead, which was smooth and polished as the marble of a statue, and I concluded for myself that it was as fair and transparent. From her forehead to her hair was a brief distance, and as I passed my fingers over it, I judged it to be black, as it felt to me thick, tufty, long, and silky, and caused me to decide that Rose was a brunette. With increasing boldness, my hand strayed through a long, soft ringlet, to undertake a veritable voyage of delight over the features of a woman, and on its course, as slowly as possible, I realized the fact that Rose's face was beautiful. It now remained to know or guess the countess's age. Her delicate, but bright and sparkling, discourse and laughter had not in them the tone of more than twenty-five years.

In Vienna I was installed in the hospitable mansion of the countess; her servants assiduous in their attentions. My friends of the French embassy visited me each morning; the voices of clever singers and masterly instrumentalists each night enchanted me with their rich floods of Italian and German melody. Rose appeared to my sense younger, more beautiful, than ever. All that was wanting to my perfect happiness was one ray of sunshine—nay, less, a mere pencil of light.

One day, after the dinner, the countess led me back mysteriously to my apartment, and I stretched myself on a large fauteuil which served for my resting-couch.

Shortly after, I heard the footsteps of two visitors—one which I recognized as that of Rose,

the other a trailing, dragging, slow step like an old man's. My visitors approached without addressing a word to me. That they were intently regarding me, I knew—I felt sure. To feel myself the object of this silent, pitying scrutiny was inexpressibly painful to me.

"Who is there?" I exclaimed, in a voice trembling with suppressed emotion and anger.

I felt a hand laid on my forehead, whose touch I knew so marvellously well; and I continued, as I smiled on Rose:

"You are not with me here alone?"

"No, my friend; I have brought hither to see you one of the most celebrated oculists of Germany; he is before you to observe and examine and judge the symptoms of your case; he believes that he can cure you, and belief with him is almost certainty—he will cure you!"

"Rose, this is no longer your hand upon my brow! Whose touch is this?"

"Oh, Frederic! do not speak!—Continue firm and immovable under the doctor's hands."

The doctor, without a word spoken by him, lifted my eyelids. Almost at the same moment two awful pangs, acute and instantaneous as two stabs from poniards thin and sharp as needles, drew from me a wild cry of anguish. Instantly a kerchief in form of bandage was drawn and bound about my eyes (Rose's, perhaps, I thought), and they left me to rest and to reflection.

The night following, the countess caused a simple nightlight to be brought into my chamber. She came and took her place beside me. I doubted not the doctor was close by, for I was conscious that I was surrounded by a silent and attentive group, whose stillness had something of the awful in it.

At last the bandage was drawn from my eyes, and, oh! judge of my joy, my happiness, my delirium! my darkened existence was reborn to the life of light! I beheld around men, women, young girls, the servants of the mansion, all smiling and exultant at the miracle of a new resurrection from the tomb of night. It seemed to me that I should know the countess, though I had never seen her, and as one by one I looked round on the faces that surrounded me—ladies of different ages, but all with one congratulating smile—my heart cried:

"Where is Rose? Why does she hide herself? Oh, heaven! give me back the eternity of night, if only I may see her, if but for an instant, so long as I may stamp on my memory her form, her face, and the impression of her beauty!"

A voice whose sound thrilled me to the core answered my thought.

"Frederic," spoke the countess, "after God, who has protected you, there is your saviour. First, give your thanks to heaven, and then to Dr. Muldorff."

Why should I thank the doctor? True, he had cured me, but she—she alone had saved me. My first glances belonged to Rose, and I was impatient to bestow them on her, that they might seem to speak to her and say:

"To my saviour the grateful homage of my sight belongs!"

Oh, my friend! what a surprise, what shame, what grief! This Rose, so beautiful—Rose, my beloved, was a woman already faded and wrinkled by age. Rose was fifty years of age at least!

Let me own it—I almost fainted with emotion and regret as I sunk on my knees before her. With a sudden almost savage impulse I seized that precious bandage and bound it once again about my eyes. By the doctor's orders, I once more returned to darkness, and found again in my heart, with the image of the fair being I had dreamed of, my illusions and my consolation.

Each night, at the same hour, I was habituated, by removing the bandage, to support the glare of the nightlight. At length a more powerful light replaced its feeble glow, and I awaited impatiently that in its turn the lamp might give place to the sunlight.

A strange circumstance! A singular vision! Which could only be the sport of chance, or the illusion of love, or of light! Each succeeding night, on closer observation of her, I appeared to

discover in the age of my protectress some grace which made her younger, some smile which lent an added charm, some expression of her eyes revealing an hidden coquetry, some mysterious treasure which love had forgotten to steal in flying off with her youth. Yes, each night brought to my eyes a power of vision more acute, more brilliant than that of the former. And in the same time, by a miracle which seemed to startle my reason, each day, each hour, each minute, seemed, as if to pleasure me, to render some new trait of youth or beauty to the noble features of the countess. A secret voice murmured in the depth of my soul:

"One more magic touch, one more stroke of the fairy pencil on this new countenance, this changeful face, and the marvellous metamorphose will be complete; the countess of fifty years of age will disappear for ever, and Rose, she of scarcely twenty-five, will henceforth take her place."

One beauteous morning the sun lit up the spectacle of a rare and charming prodigy. This day, for the first time, I had received from the doctor the permission to contemplate the splendour of the celestial light.

After a long and magnificent promenade among the beauties of earth I had re-entered the countess's salon. She was alone there, and probably was awaiting me. I approached her tremblingly, and seating myself by her side, I cast down my eyes for fear, or rather I feared, and at the same time wished, to look on her once more.

"Frederic," said she, "do you remember a pleasant scene which passed between us in my travelling carriage? You being blind—for that reason, no doubt—a fancy possessed you to know what character of face and feature your travelling companion possessed, or, as you expressed it, 'To see me by the touch.' All the world desires the impossible. Do you remember it?"

"I remember it, madam, and I blush for my audacious curiosity."

"You are pardoned! It was not an easy task for one who was blind to well ascertain the features of another. Do you remember also in what fashion you sought to guess at, to recognize, or, as you said, 'To see her'?"

"Oh, yes! I remember perfectly."

"You said to me, with a singular fatuity, 'I know you; I have regarded—I have seen you!'"

"I said truly, madam."

"You repeatedly remarked, 'Madam, you have luxuriant black hair, your eyes are large and blue, the most beautiful of the beautiful; you are blessed with fresh crimson lips, and an ever-smiling mouth; your beauty, madam, to me is admirable.'"

"It was and is my admiration, madam."

"Alas! my poor friend, what will become of your complaisant admiration. The blind propose, and the clear-sighted dispose. You are no longer blind. Look at me in the light of truth."

I raised my eyes and earnestly regarded her.

"Rose, Rose!" I exclaimed, prostrating myself at her knees, "there is a God who protects the blind! I recognize you still; I look upon you; I see you again! Yes, yes! you have beauteous black hair, your eyes are large and dark, and the most beautiful of the beautiful, fresh crimson lips, and an ever-smiling mouth! Your beauty, madam, to me is admirable. Ah, Rose, dear Rose! I understand; you have done that for my suffering heart which the doctor has done for my afflicted eyes. He has accommodated my vision to the keen brilliancy of the light; you have graduated my love to the full radiance of your beauty!"

My friend, you now know all—the marvellous history of my misfortune, of my marriage, and of my happiness; you know the secret of a charitable preference which has astonished so many; you know the mystery of some smiling alma, which Rose and I allow ourselves to drop in the imploring palms of the poor, needy blind.

We give with the "charity of memory," and with our sight turned inward towards the perfect light of heaven.

THE WITHERED BRANCH.

A ROMANTIC STORY OF THE
WELSH COAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WALLADMOR."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SIR MORGAN IS SURPRISED.

A STRANGER, muffled up in a cloak, had taken advantage of some confusion in the great gate, caused by a mob of unruly sympathizers with the newly-taken prisoner, to pass the gate unobserved.

He appeared to be well acquainted with the plan of the castle, and pressed on to one of the principal saloons, in which at this moment Sir Morgan Walladmor was sitting alone.

A slight rustling at the other end of the room caused Sir Morgan to raise his head from the letters which lay before him; and, seeing a dusky figure standing between two whole-length portraits of his ancestors, he almost began to imagine that some one of the house of Walladmor had returned from the grave to give him ghostly admonition.

The stranger turned and locked the door; and then, without unsmoothing himself, advanced towards Sir Morgan, who, on his part, was struck with some indistinct sense of awe as before a mysterious being—but kept his seat without alarm. A few paces from the table the stranger paused, and said:

"Sir Morgan Walladmor, I come to let you know that an innocent man is confined under your sanction. The prisoner in the chambers of the Falcon's Tower is not the person you take him for."

"And is this your reason for pressing thus unceremoniously to my presence?"

"It is."

"Then appear as a witness for the accused, and give your evidence before the jury by whom he will be tried."

"Sir Morgan, I again assure you that your prisoner is not Captain Edward Nicholas."

"Who then?"

"Let it suffice that he is not Captain Nicholas."

"But who is it that I am required to believe? Who are you? What vouchers, what security, do you offer for the truth of what you tell me?"

"Security! You would have security? You shall. Do you remember that time when the great Dutch ship was cruising off the coast, and the landing of the crew was nightly expected?"

"I remember it well, for at that time I had beset the coast with faithful followers. Political disturbances at Chester and Shrewsbury concurred at that time to make such a descent on the coast a subject of much alarm. And once or twice I watched myself all night through."

"True; and on the 29th of September you were lying upon your arms behind Arthur's Pillar. About midnight a man in the uniform of a Sea Fencible joined you. And you may remember some conversation you had with him?"

Had Sir Morgan Walladmor been addicted to trembling, he would now have trembled. With earnest gaze and outstretched arms he listened without speaking to the stranger, who continued:

"You talked together until the moon was setting, and then, when the work was done, Sir Morgan—when the work was done, a shot was fired, and in the twinkling of an eye up sprang the Sea Fencible, and he cried aloud, as I do now, 'Farewell! Sir Morgan Walladmor!'"

And, so saying, the stranger threw open his cloak, discovering underneath a dirk and a brace of pistols; and, at the same time, with an impressive gesture, he raised his cap from his head.

"It is Captain Nicholas!" exclaimed the baronet.

"At your service, Sir Morgan Walladmor."

Do you now believe that your prisoner is innocent?"

Sir Morgan sprang forward as if to detain him, but Captain Nicholas convinced him that he had taken his measures well, and was not likely to be intercepted.

"I have the command of the door," said he; "and your household, Sir Morgan, at this moment is too much occupied with Mr. Dulberry and a radical mob to have any ears for your summons."

Then, in a lower and more impressive voice, he added:

"Grey hairs I reverence, and to you in particular, least of all men, do I bear malice—though oft in my younger days, sir, you have cost me an ague-fit."

Sir Morgan was confounded. The bold offender, with rapid steps, moved down the whole length of the saloon, opened the folding doors, and vanished.

Sir Morgan was still listening to the steps of the departing visitor, as he descended the great staircase. And the last echo had reached his ear from the remote windings of the castle chambers, whilst he was yet unresolved what course he should pursue.

CHAPTER XXVII.

EXPLANATIONS.

BERTRAM was now immediately restored to liberty. Indeed, the baronet had never perfectly acquiesced in the presumptions, however circumstantial, which went to identify him with Captain Nicholas. Bertram, as it struck him, looked younger, and had the appearance of greater delicacy of constitution, or at least of having been bred up less hardily; whence, perhaps, was derived his more juvenile aspect. His voice also sounded very different; and, though Sir Morgan had been able to recall the peculiar tone of Captain Nicholas, he recognized it most unequivocally at that instant when the captain threw off his disguise. A considerable interest in Bertram had from the first arisen in Sir Morgan's mind from the general air of candour and amiable feeling which marked his demeanour; and this interest was not weakened by the resemblance which Sir Morgan believed that he discovered in Bertram's features and expression to the portraits in the Walladmor picture-gallery of two distinguished ancestors of his own house. Partly on these special claims to his notice, and partly with the general desire of expressing his concern to the young man for the unmerited distress into which he had been thrown, the kind-hearted old gentleman gave him a pressing invitation to take up his abode for some time in Walladmor Castle; an invitation which, as it offered him a ready introduction into English society, and was pressed with evident sincerity, Bertram did not hesitate to accept.

The clergyman of the parish, who had been sent to Bertram as a ghostly adviser and summodor to repentance, could not boast of much success with his subject in that character, and the Reverend Mr. Williams, who had failed in his spiritual mission, was turned to good worldly account by Bertram as a gossip and a mine of information upon all questions which had arisen to excite his curiosity in the course of his recent adventures.

The case of poor Mrs. Godber, his aged hostess in Anglesa, was easily explained.

Four-and-twenty years ago her eldest son, at that time about seventeen years old, had participated in some smuggling transaction, during which two revenue officers had been killed under circumstances which the law adjudged to be murder.

Nobody suspected young Godber of having (in the English sense of the word) assisted in this murder, foreseen it, or approved it; but in the French sense he did "assist"—that is, he was present; and, therefore, in the eye of the law, he was an accessory. As such, he was put upon his trial—found guilty—and sentenced to death.

Unfortunately, at this time the outrages of

the smugglers on the coast of Wales had become so frequent and terrific that it was judged necessary to make an example. The case came before the Privy Council; the opinion of Sir Morgan Walladmor, as Lord Lieutenant of the two counties chiefly infested by the smugglers, naturally weighed a good deal with the Council; and his opinion was unfavourable to the poor young criminal.

"But in later years," said Mr. Williams, "and when Sir Morgan had come to think very differently on some parts of that unhappy affair, I have often heard him protest with earnestness that in giving the opinion he did at the Council he was simply reporting the universal judgment of the magistracy throughout the maritime counties of North Wales. This, Mr. Bertram, I am sure was true. But that was known to few; and Sir Morgan from his high station drew the whole blame upon himself; and perhaps in one view not unjustly. For, though he was not single in the opinion which decided the case against the poor boy, it was generally believed that his single voice on the other side the question would have outweighed all opposition and have obtained the mercy of the crown. So at least the poor boy's mother thought; and she addressed herself to Sir Morgan, morning, noon, and night. The lad was her darling child; indeed, her other son, Tom, was then only an infant; and, as the time drew near for his execution, she was like a mad thing. Never was there such an agony of intercession. She wept, and prayed, and clung about Sir Morgan's knees and tore her hair; she rushed past all the servants, ran upstairs and found out Lady Walladmor's room. Lady Walladmore was then ill, and sitting in her dressing-room, but she (God love her!) was the kindest creature in the world; and she was easily won to come and beg for the poor distracted mother. In the great hall she knelt to Sir Morgan; but all wouldn't do. I have heard Sir Morgan say that his heart relented at that time, and he had a sort of misgiving upon him that night as he looked back upon the frantic woman from the head of the great staircase, that all could not be right—and that some evil would fall upon him for standing out against such pleadings as he had just heard. Still, his sense of duty, according to the notion he then had of his duty, obliged him to persist; and, besides, he told them both that after what had been said to the Council it was now impossible to make another application on the case—unless some new circumstance in the boy's favour had come out."

"And how, meantime, did her son behave?"

"Oh, sir, incomparably well. He knew his mother's temper; and the very night before he suffered, as he hung about her neck and kissed her at their farewell interview, he wrung her hand and prayed her to put aside all thoughts of vengeance. I attended him to the last, and his final words to me on the scaffold, as the executioner prepared to draw the cap over his face, were: 'God bless you, sir, and remember!' by which he meant to remind me of his only request—and that was that I would visit his mother and endeavour to soothe her into resignation, and persuade her to let him sleep unmolested in his grave. Sir Morgan displayed great emotion when he heard this report of the boy's latter hours; and afterwards much more, when two of the older smugglers were taken and condemned for the same murders, for their confessions wholly exonerated him from all knowledge of their worst actions. He was considered by the whole gang as a mere child—so, indeed, he was—and nothing was ever communicated to him of their schemes; nor was he ever present at any of them except by mere accident."

"About three months after the execution of the poor boy, and when the ferment of that unhappy affair was beginning to subside in all minds but those of his mother and of Sir Morgan, Lady Walladmor lay in of twins."

"By whose means it never has been discovered, but from some quarter or other moving representations had been made to Lady Walladmor in favour of a young woman who about

that time applied for the place of under-nurse. But all these representations were false, as came out when it was too late. It was not known at that time—or, if it were, only to those who allowed it no weight in their minds—that she was a niece of Gillie Godber's, who had lived for the seven last years of her life in her aunt's house, had fallen deeply under her influence, and shared in her feelings with regard to the execution of the young boy, her cousin. And now it was, Mr. Bertram, that Gillie Godber forfeited all hold on the public sympathy—even amongst those whose rank indisposed them to judge Sir Morgan with any charity. All hearts were steeled against her. Sir Morgan might be thought to have done her wrong; with regard to the fact, as it ultimately came out, he certainly had; though not, as I am sure, in design or according to the light of his conscience at that time. But for Lady Walladmor, the meek and gentle lady that had wept with her—wept for her—pleaded for her—prayed for her—knew for her; Gillie Godber, that was a mother by so bitter a mother's pang, to forget the mother's heart in her benefactress; she, that mourned for a son, to tear the infants for ever from their mother's breasts, and consign them—oh! heart of Herod!—to a life worse than a thousand deaths amongst robbers, pirates, murderers—this it was that blotted out from all men's memories her own wrongs, cancelled and tore the record of her sufferings.

"Mr. Bertram, it will be four-and-twenty years next summer from the date of this miserable transaction; and yet I protest that the storm of affliction which in one night descended upon this ancient house of Walladmor was, in itself, in its origin, and its irreparable nature, so memorable a scene of human frailty, such a monument of the awful power for evil which is lodged in the humblest of human beings when shaken by extremity of passion and liberated from restraints of conscience, that at this moment the impression of all its circumstances is as fresh and perfect as if it had happened yesterday; nor do I think that any time could avail to dim them."

"The dreadful event took place on the 12th of June, three-and-twenty years ago—dating from the summer which is past. About seven o'clock on the evening of that day, finding herself unusually languid and weary, Lady Walladmor had lain down on a sofa in one of the children's apartments. A fortnight, I ought to mention, had passed from the time of her accouchement. She had suffered much, and was recovering but slowly; and her female attendants had, in consequence, been a good deal harassed by unseasonable watchings and sudden disturbances of their rest. They, poor creatures! submitted to these as they would have done to far greater hardships, cheerfully and without a murmur; indeed, all the servants in the castle would have gone through fire and water to have served their lady—all but one; and THAT one, alas! was now left alone in attendance upon her."

"Lady Walladmor, who was all consideration for everybody about her, and just such another angel upon earth as Miss Walladmor is, had dismissed her own maid and the upper nurse—to refresh themselves in any way they thought fit from the fatigue of their long day's attendance; for they had been called up at two o'clock in the morning. One of the under-nurses was engaged in the laundry. And thus it happened that the duty of attending the two children, who were both asleep in the adjoining room devoted on that serpent—Winifred Griffiths."

"Winifred Griffiths!" exclaimed Bertram, in a tone of consternation.

"Yes, Winifred Griffiths!" and at the same time Mr. Williams looked at him keenly; "have you ever met with a person of that name?"

"I do not know that I have," replied Bertram; "but I remember reading many books in my youth that bore that name in the blank leaves. One of these I left at Machynioth; and I will show it to you to-morrow. Meantime, pray go on."

Mr. Williams mused a little, and then proceeded.

"Griffiths, as she was generally called in the castle, to distinguish her from another Winifred upon the establishment, had a style of person and countenance much like those of her aunt, Mrs. Godber; but she was still handsomer, and (if possible) prouder. The elegance of her manners recommended her especially to Lady Walladmor."

"On the present occasion, as the other women were leaving the room, Lady Walladmor bade them tell Griffiths to stay in the adjoining, one; meaning, in case she found herself unable to sleep, to go and sit by the side of her children, whilst Griffiths read to her. Hoping, however, that she might be able to sleep, they were directed not to return until Griffiths or her ladyship should ring."

"Unhappy mother! unhappy children! Lady Walladmor fell asleep; and, when she next awoke, the room was gloomy with dusk—indeed, it was all but dark, for it must have been ten o'clock. She rang the bell, and the housekeeper, who happened to be passing the door, answered it."

"Oh, is that you, Mrs. Howell?" said her ladyship; "send candles, and tell Lady Charlotte that she may come up, if she is not gone to bed."

"Lady Charlotte Vaughan was a little girl of seven years old, a daughter of the Earl of Kilgarra, who married Lady Walladmor's sister, and had been for some months on a visit to her aunt. In a transport of pleasure on receiving this permission, the child ran up before the candles; and, on kissing her, it seemed that Lady Walladmor had asked playfully what they would say at Kilgarra if they knew of her keeping such late hours."

"Upon this the child had answered gaily that her little cousins were not yet gone to bed; and that at least she must stay up till after them."

"Your cousins, my love, I am sorry to say, sleepless in the night than the day. However, they have been in bed for hours."

"Oh, no! they are gone out into the park."

"Lady Walladmor must have thought the child dreaming. She questioned her, and no doubt heard the same account from her which she afterwards repeated to us all. How far she was impressed by it cannot be known; but possibly, at this moment, the silence of the adjoining room struck her as remarkable. At any rate, as the ready means of putting an end to all doubts, she went thither—called probably—receiving no answer, felt about in the darkness for her children's cradles; found them; they were empty—they were cold!"

"Lady Walladmor uttered a piercing shriek and fell to the ground."

"Lady Charlotte ran to alarm the family; the servant, whom she met on the stairs with the candles, sent her on to summon assistance, whilst she herself pressed forwards; in half a minute all Lady Walladmor's women were about her; there was no need to make inquiries; the empty cradles told the miserable tale, and circumstances of confirmation came out at every moment."

"With the rapidity of a train of gunpowder the whole course of the transaction and its devilish purpose came out. Lady Charlotte had met Griffiths in a passage which you have perhaps observed to connect the greenhouse with what was then Lady Walladmor's suite of apartments; in this passage there was a private door into the park, of which the key hung in the very room where the poor mother was sleeping. As she passed Griffiths said nothing; but, as she came near, one of the children cried, and Griffiths endeavoured to stifle the cry by drawing her cloak closer—in doing which, a sudden motion of her arm caused the cloak to open, and Lady Charlotte had distinctly seen both her little cousins."

"She had been seen hurrying along by a woodman, who observed her from a distance, and described her dress accurately. This was about

eight o'clock. Ten minutes later she had been seen in company with another woman traversing the sea-shore. Then all at once it came out in the general confusion that Griffiths was the niece of Gillie Godber. Sir Morgan had himself, about nine o'clock, in coming over the hills from Dolgelly, observed the smuggling ship under sail. The lover of Griffiths was known to be one of the smugglers—all of them, it is certain, would abet any plan of vengeance upon Sir Morgan Walladmor; and, in less time than I have taken to relate it, the whole devilish plot—mode, purpose, and too probable success—became apparent to everybody in the castle."

"What was to be done? All were eager to be in motion; all fretting, I may say, to follow and avenge. But how? or with what hope?"

"One bold fellow offered to man Sir Morgan's pinnace, barge, and all the other small craft he could collect, with sailors and others from the neighbourhood—to pursue the smuggler, and to carry her, if possible, by boarding. But this, considering the strength of the smuggler, was too hopeless an attempt to be countenanced."

"There were, however, king's ships cruising or in port all the way between Barmouth and Parkgate. The nearest of these, a sloop called the 'Falcon,' was said to be lying at anchor off Aber, between Bangor and Conway; and in that direction expresses were sent off one upon the heels of the other—some having orders to go on to Parkgate and Liverpool."

"A favourite groom of Sir Morgan's on this occasion rode a thoroughbred horse in two hours and a quarter to Bangor Ferry. Between Baddgelart and Carnarvon he had learned that the sloop was anchored off Beaumaris; he turned aside, therefore, from the Bangor road to the Ferry."

"There he jumped into a six-oared boat, and made for Beaumaris."

"Faithfully he did his duty, as you will suppose when I tell you that the castle clock had struck ten when he mounted, and a little after one we that stood on the summit of Arthur's Chair—the high peak to the northward—heard a sudden report in the direction of Carnarvon. We all knew that this must be a signal to us from the 'Falcon,' giving notice of her approach. She was now standing through the Menai Strait. Twenty minutes after this a second gun was fired; and the prodigious roar of echoes which it awoke in the mountains proclaimed that she had passed Carnarvon."

"At two the flashes of her guns became visible, and showed that she had uncovered the point of Llandoverly."

"At a quarter past two there was light enough to make her out distinctly; she carried a press of sail; and a few minutes after that we discovered the smuggler in the offing, about three miles to leeward of the 'Falcon.'"

(To be continued.)

A SEA GULL ASKED TO BREAKFAST.—It is remarkable how readily birds, even those which seldom frequent the haunts of man, may be brought to place some degree of confidence in him. A gentleman on the north coast of Cornwall, one morning at breakfast-time, threw a piece of bread out of the window to a stray sea gull, which happened to have made its appearance at the moment. The bird ate the bread and flew away. The next day, at the same hour, he appeared again, was again fed, and departed. From this time, for a period of eighteen years, the gull never failed to show himself at the window every morning at the same hour, and to stalk up and down till he had received his meal (a basin of bread and milk), when he instantly took leave till next morning. The only time that he omitted to do this was during the time of the pilchards being on the coast, which lasted about six weeks in each year, and at this time he omitted his morning visit. At length he brought one of his own species with him to partake of his meal, and they continued to come together daily for about a fortnight, when they suddenly disappeared, and were never seen again afterward.

WITHIN AN ACE.

By Mrs. H. G. SOMERVILLE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

"CAN you inform me how long I have to wait for a train?"

The voice that asked this question fell on the ear with all the grateful effect of a musical peal of bells, and the listener, Lionel Dacre, turned involuntarily to look at the speaker.

She was a tiny little woman, garbed in deepest black, her figure hidden by the fur-lined cloak she had drawn closely round her, as if, feeling the intense cold keenly, and her face covered by a veil of thick crape, which entirely obscured her features, rendering it impossible to say whether she were young or old, fair or the reverse, through its concealing fabric.

Judging by the voice, Lionel decided that she was young, and, moreover, pretty; for he felt it would be "rank blasphemy" to ascribe an ugly face as a companion to such mellifluous tones as those to which he had just listened.

Having received an answer to her question, which had been addressed to the booking-clerk, she turned and went into the general waiting-room, where a huge fire blazed cheerily; drawing a chair forward, she sat down beside it.

Redchurch Station is not a busy one at the best of times, but on this occasion it was entirely deserted save for the two persons we have mentioned, Lionel Dacre and the little lady in black.

That she was a lady was to be inferred from the refined accent and mode of her speech, and that undefined something that the underbred seldom acquire.

Lionel Dacre followed her into the waiting-room, for it was cold in the booking-office, and he had a wait of half an hour before him, which was by no means a pleasant one in his present mood, and which he was quite willing to abridge in any innocent manner that might be.

So he followed her into the waiting-room, hoping against hope to hear her speak once more. But he was not destined to be so fortunate.

She had taken a book from her reticule, and, without raising her veil—greatly to Lionel's disappointment—she sat quietly reading for perhaps twenty minutes, until the express was signalled, when she closed and replaced it in the bag, and sought the up platform.

He saw her get into a second-class carriage, the door of which he was just in time to open as she stood struggling with its obdurate handle; but her thanks were mutely expressed in a gracefully courteous bow, which left him transfixed with admiring surprise as the train glided on its way.

"Who can she be?" he said to himself. "Not a native of these parts, that's certain. Her bow would have done credit to a duchess."

Then he turns his attention to his own concerns, and looks about for the friend he has come to meet.

"Not here, of course," he mutters, as he scans the three passengers who have alighted from the 4.58, which is just disappearing round the curve lower down the line.

They consist of two elderly farmers with thick, knobbed sticks, and ditto woollen gloves, which they are obliged to pull off to get at their tickets, and a smart page-boy with a box of out flowers for one of the belles of the neighbourhood, who whistles and stamps impatiently at being kept a minute or two at the barrier until the ticket-collector unlocks it.

"Evening, sir," he says, as he passes Dacre, who is well known in the locality, and generally liked, and, touching his cap, is about to spring down the steps four at a time when Lionel stops him.

"Seen anything of Mr. Gibson, Archer? You have just come from Croydon, have you not?"

"Yes, sir; I just lost the 3.30, and I had to take the express. Miss Desmond is going to a ball to-night, so I've had to fetch these from town," tapping the box lid as he speaks.

"Was Mr. Gibson on the platform at Croydon? He was coming by one of the last two trains."

"No, sir. I didn't see anything of him. The snow's stopped him, sir, p'raps."

"Perhaps. Good night."

Buttoning up his overcoat and arranging his muffler round his throat, Mr. Dacre sets out on his homeward way, a dark frown disfiguring his usually bonnie countenance, and boding ill for the individual to whose non-appearance it is directly attributable.

"Something wrong there," he mutters. "Wish girls were not such headstrong creatures; but one might as well expect the leaning tower of Pisa to take to the perpendicular by the force of argument, as hope to reason a woman out of her leaning to the god of her idolatry. Elsie, of all people, to be so infatuated with this man! What can she see in him?"

Which was somewhat unjust on the part of Lionel Dacre, Esq. True, Montague Gibson could not boast of the same number of inches nor of so many pounds avoirdupois as himself; but he was a very presentable figure of a man, nevertheless, and had subtle gifts of fascination unknown to the other's homelier nature, and only exercised on those whom he deemed it worth his while to dazzle by assuming virtues he had not.

Past-master as he was in the arts of hypocrisy and deception, it was no such great wonder if "weak woman" suffered at his hands whenever it pleased him to exert his talents for her enthrallment; and it was his proudest boast that he could make any girl in love with him, if he only had a "fair field and no favour," and that most women had, as it were, a natural tendresse for him which gave him an immediate passport to their favour.

With a rapid stride Lionel goes frowning down the snowy street, but pulls up sharply on hearing his name called by someone behind him.

It proves to be the old porter from the station, a character in his way, who, breathless with running, holds out a black-edged letter to him.

"This yours, sir?" he asks, as soon as he can speak. "It was lying on the floor in the waiting-room."

Mr. Dacre glances at it.

"No, Barker, it is not mine. It must belong to the lady who was sitting by the fire reading. You saw her."

"What had I better do with it, sir?"

"It is intended for the post, I think. Has it a stamp?" and he takes it from the man's hand and looks at the superscription. "Montague—All right, Barker. I will drop it in the pillar. I am going past," taking a stamp from his pocket-book and affixing it to the right-hand corner of the black-sealed envelope, and putting it into his pocket, with a puzzled look.

The address has startled him, though why it should be cannot say. There are plenty of people who know Montague Gibson and write to him without its being matter for wonderment. But the uneasy feeling remains after he has posted the letter, and it will not be exorcised nor "pooh-poohed" out of existence.

"Has he not come?" says Miss Dacre (the Elsie of his thoughts), in a disappointed tone, as he enters the drawing-room alone.

"No, darling. I am afraid you will not see him to-night. He has probably been delayed."

"Oh, Lionel! perhaps there has been an accident?"

"No, I do not think that. We should have heard in that case. Besides, the page from Desmond's was in town this afternoon, and he says he saw nothing of him. I should not worry if I were you, dear. He has disappointed you before," and a contemptuous smile curls the corners of his expressive mouth.

"But it has not been his fault, Lionel," she replies, as if hurt by the slur cast on her lover.

"He is not able to help himself in the matter. Business is so exacting, you know."

"Humph! I suppose it is. So we will make excuses for him once more. And let us hope that it is business that keeps him," he mutters, under his breath, as he leaves the room to dress for dinner.

Miss Dacre is already dressed, and as she stands under the glittering cut-glass gaselier in the centre of the great drawing-room, in her sweeping robe of myrtle-green brocaded velvet, trimmed with satin and heavy lace, a bunch of tea-roses fastened at the throat, her only ornament save and except the diamond drops in her shell-like ears, she is as fair a picture of womanhood as one need wish to see.

She is tall and finely formed, has glossy, auburn hair, dark blue eyes, and a complexion whose only fault is that it is too white if anything.

She sits down to her piano to while away the hour she had hoped to spend with her lover, and presently the apartment is filled with the thrilling notes of her magnificent contralto.

In the room above a visitor sits spellbound by her song. Clearly and distinctly it floats upward to him, so that he can well nigh distinguish the words, and with all the force of his being he echoes their sentiment:—

"Oh! for the days beyond recalling!
Oh! for the golden days!"

The days beyond recalling—when Elsie Dacre was nearer to him; before she and her brother had come into their present wealth! But they are fled for ever, and Elsie is the affianced wife of another. He leans his head wearily on his hand, and sinks into a reverie, which arrests the progress of his toilet, and endangers his punctuality at the dinner-table, were he not aroused therefrom by the entrance of his friend and host, Lionel Dacre.

"Elsie has not lost her gift of song," he remarks, with a faint smile. "I should have been ready ere now but for her syren tones."

"Syren tones? Do you know, I never heard before to-day what could really be described as syren tones? Elsie sings splendidly, I know; but this was something altogether unique in voices. It was a girl at the station."

"Singing at the station?"

"No—no. Only speaking. But such an exquisitely musical accent I have certainly never listened to before. I was waiting for that black—for Gibson. I must ask him about her, for, strange to say, she dropped a letter addressed to him, which I have just posted."

"You appear interested in her?"

"I am, greatly."

"Let us hope, then, for her own sake, that he knows very little about her."

"Ah! you do not love him any more than myself! Wish Elsie did not, either; but wishes will not alter facts, will they?" he adds, with a sympathising glance at the pale, proud face of the other.

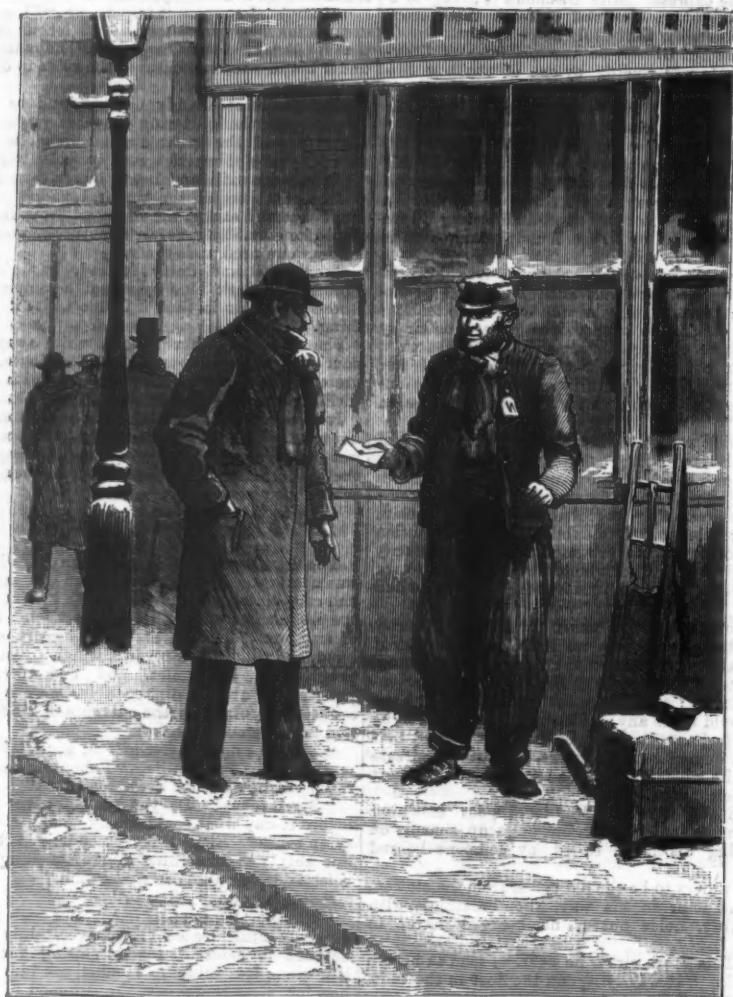
Meanwhile, the girl with the wondrously sweet voice has reached her destination, and at the terminus she seeks the letter dropped by her in the waiting-room.

"I must have dropped it unnoticed from my book," she soliloquizes. "Strange! I wonder whether it will reach him or not? I hope not, if it bears that post-mark. However, it is beyond my power to help it now. It was to be, I suppose."

Then she, too, mixes with the stream of London life, and is lost to sight in the crowds that throng its streets.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning, in an elegantly furnished bachelor apartment, Montague Gibson sits sipping his coffee and devouring substantial plates of various comestibles suitable to the first meal of the day. We say bachelor apartment advisedly, for the adornments of the room are not only masculine and bony, but of such a character as to preclude the presence of pure womanhood; more especially as regards the engra-



["THIS YOURS, SIR?" HE ASKS, AS SOON AS HE CAN SPEAK.]

vings which line the walls, most of which are of that class designated by the print-dealers as "rather free."

He has just opened the letter written by the girl in black (whose name we learn from its signature, is Winnifred Corry), posted by Lionel Dacre at the local office, and bearing, consequently, its mark, Redchurch. He reads it with a contemptuous smile playing on his lips, and he laughs aloud as he lays it down.

"Little fool! to think she could escape me, when she posts it at the very place. Now I would not mind laying long odds that I know what took her to Redchurch, and who it is that will afford her the asylum she talks of. No, no, Miss Winnie, you are not out of the toils yet; and if I mistake not, you shall do me one good turn before we part, which shall indemnify me for the scurvy treatment I have received of late at the hands of the jade we call Fortune. Let me see," and he takes one or two turns up and down the room, humming an air from "Semi-ramide."

"By Jove!" he exclaims, suddenly stopping in his perambulations, "if it be as I suspect, what a strange mix-up it will be, to be sure! It will require careful driving, too, to avoid going over the edge, I am bothered if it won't! If Winnie turns restive or kicks over the traces, now, it will be all up with me. But she won't. That thrice-blessed and ever-to-be-commended brother of hers has that, thank goodness! She'll do it for his sake, if not for mine. I

suppose that last would be too much to expect, Monty, my boy, after all that has passed. Women are fools, but not quite such fools as that would be. No, I must not trust to that any longer. It will be for the brother's sake, or not at all; but I can trust to that, I am confident. Her affection for him will bear any strain; of that I am convinced. What a chance to turn up for a fellow! But I am counting my chickens before they are hatched," he breaks off abruptly. "Time enough to contemplate the profit when I am sure of the possibility."

Turning to the table, he takes up the letter and peruses it once more with the same contemptuous expression as before, making derisive running comments as he reads.

"Made up her mind," has she, 'never to see or hold communication with me again'; it takes two to that bargain, my lady, and I have made up my mind just the other way. 'Forgives me my duplicity and treachery, and is willing to forego the money debt between us.' Thank you for nothing, young woman; it would have been all the same if you were not. 'Has at last the courage to face the blank in her life caused by my desertion, and trusts she may be allowed to enjoy the asylum she has secured for herself, without molestation from me.' Certainly, my child, if you will only be obedient to me once more. After that you can enjoy an eternity of peace for all I care. 'Has left her late lodgings and desires me not to trace her, as it will be better not.' Happy to oblige, I'm sure, but

the world is very small and it may chance that we shall meet without the slightest effort on my part. In that case, of course, I must be exonerated from blame!" and he tears the paper into infinitesimal pieces ere he departs for his daily avocations.

What he is, is a mystery no one seems able to penetrate. He is credited with being a wealthy man, and is supposed to have dealings on the Stock Exchange, but what foundation there is for the report beyond his own assertion, it would be hard to say. True, he speaks of thousands as ordinary folk talk of pounds, and is apparently in no want of the "ready" wherewith to gratify his taste or his fancy; his name also appears on the list of directors of several of the big mining companies whose prospectuses, at any rate, show a most flourishing state of affairs. Whether this ought to be considered a sufficient guarantee of his substantiality must be left. It is evidently so considered by a certain section of the community who are agreeable to accepting him at his own valuation.

His acquaintance with the Dacres had been formed at the house of a mutual friend, and knowing that she had an equal interest with her brother, in the very handsome fortune which had fallen to them from a distant relative, he had paid Elsie attentions which resulted in their engagement, and their marriage was supposed to be not very far off, though it was but seldom that he made any reference to it, even to his fiancée.

"Have you met with anything in the shape of a companion yet, Elsie?" he asks, that same evening, after having made his peace with her for his "unavoidable absence" as he termed it, the truth being that he had other fish to fry in the shape of guinea "Nap" with two of the "gilded youth" of the period, who have, or appear to have, nothing better to do with the hard-earned wealth of their hardworking progenitors than to squander it in absolute folly, one generation dissipating, in less than its own span frequently, what it has taken several to build up.

"Yes, I think I have engaged a young lady who will suit me in every way. She was here yesterday to make final arrangements. She comes on Friday, and her name is Winn."

"Then I shall have the pleasure of meeting her on the very day on which she makes her first appearance here. By the way, what is she like? Little and dark, as a foil to you, I suppose," smiling. "You women never can bear to have a rival in your own especial line of beauty, you know."

"How strange! You have described her exactly. She is quite tiny in height and figure, and a perfect gipsy in complexion, with the loveliest dark eyes and blue-black hair you ever saw. I felt greatly drawn towards her when I saw her, and shall, without doubt, make a pet of her, if only her temper prove as sweet as her expression and her voice."

"What references did she give? I hope you will be particular in that respect. There are so many adventurers about."

"Oh, no one could suspect this child. Besides, she has referred me to the clergyman of the parish where her mother died a few weeks back, and his reply to my letter is eminently satisfactory."

"What can he know of her real character? She may be anything, for all he knows to the contrary. They only lived there a short—How long did you say he had been acquainted with them?"

"I did not say, for I did not know," she replies, looking at him curiously. "Do you know Miss Winn?"

"I? No, indeed. I have never heard of her before. I was confusing what you said, dear. Of course, I am anxious you should have an irreproachable person for your new inmate," he goes on, rapidly, to divert her attention from the slip he is conscious of having made, "and am consequently suspicious of everyone who aspires to the post. Let us hope your choice will prove a wise one."

Later on, Lionel makes an opportunity for questioning him about the girl whom he had

seen at the station. It never occurs to him to connect her with his sister's talked-of new companion, whom he mentally regards as a vestal of uncertain age and anything but alluring appearance, and whose advent he does not contemplate with rapture, but rather as a necessary evil, attendant on the possession of superabundant means.

"You had a letter this morning, Gibson, did you not?" he begins, hesitatingly.

"I did," is the laconic and apparently nonchalant reply, but a keen observer would note the instantaneous putting of himself "on guard," so to speak, the watchful anxiety underlying all his surface calm.

"A letter from a woman—"

"Well? How do you know it?"

"Because she dropped it here last night."

"Here? In this house, do you mean?" he asks, with a start.

"No. At the station, where I was waiting for you. I posted it for her, thinking it was the best thing I could do. It was addressed to you."

"Thanks, very much. It reached me all right," and he blows a white smoke-wreath above his head, and watches it melt into thin air.

"Have you any objection to tell me who the writer is? I heard her speaking, and it struck me what a beautiful voice she had."

Mr. Gibson makes no reply for some minutes while he deliberately weighs the pros and cons in favour of so much of the truth as he can safely tell, the gratification of his malice (he hates Lionel Dacre), or security for himself by declaring himself ignorant of all personal knowledge of his correspondent.

He decides in favour of the last, much as he would like to torment Lionel, who, he sees, is more interested than he would care to allow, by fabricating some story against her which would effectually crush the germs of incipient passion. Prudence conquers ill-nature, however; and he states that, for aught he knows to the contrary, she may be a princess in disguise, and that her communication was a purely business one in answer to an advertisement for a good copyist.

With this explanation Lionel has perforce to be satisfied, and, in spite of his regret at not learning more of her, he feels relieved at the thought that Gibson has had nothing to do with her life, that his malign shadow has not darkened it, as it has that of too many others.

Miss Winn arrives at The Cedars on Friday afternoon, as expected, but Montague Gibson is there before her, and by skilful management he contrives to be alone in the little blue drawing-room, where five o'clock tea is usually served, when she enters it for the first time, under the guidance of a servant.

"Miss Winn, I presume?" he says, coming towards her, and speaking in a loud, significant voice, with a warning glance at the retreating domestic. "Miss Dacre will return in a moment. Till then, allow me to do the honours and offer you a chair."

The girl waits till she hears the click of the shutting door before springing at him like a little fury.

"What do you here?" she asks, in low tones of suppressed wrath.

He holds her at arms' length, laughing mockingly in her face the while, as he replies:

"Here? What is there strange in my being here, Miss Winn? Why should I not be found in the house of my betrothed wife?"

"The house of your betrothed wife!" she echoes, amazedly. "Do you refer to Miss Dacre?"

"Decidedly. There is no other lady in the house to whom the words could apply. Miss Winn I do not know, and Miss Corry voluntarily resigned any claim she might have on me. Do you intend to forbid the banns?"

"You are not worthy of her! She shall be warned."

"By whom? By you? Better not, if you value the 'asylum' you have found—to quote your own words. Beware of interfering with my schemes!" he adds, in a hissing whisper. "You will only injure yourself in doing so."

Keep your own counsel, and you shall remain here unmolested for me. Betray me by a word, and you shall live to repent it in a brother's disgrace and ruin! Make your choice!" folding his arms and calmly regarding her distress, without the slightest pity.

"Which is it to be?" he repeats, as the sound of footsteps is audible on the staircase. "Quick—peace or war? I care little which, remember. It is for your own sake—Ah! I thought you would be sensible! So you don't like the prospect from this window as well as from the other?" he says, in his ordinary tones, as the door opens to admit Elsie Dacre. "I admire your taste. I have had to introduce myself to Miss Winn, Elsie, and do the polite in your absence, and I fancy, do you know, that we understand each other already, and that we shall remain remarkably good friends," with a meaning look at the timid little creature who bears that cognomen, which brings a scarlet flush of shame and impotent anger to her pure, innocent face.

She holds her peace, however, and Montague Gibson knows that once again he has triumphed through her fears for another.

CHAPTER III.

THE days pass quickly, and the little companion, by her gentle deeds and bright, fascinating ways, has won a niche for herself in the hearts of both the Dacres—an especially warm one, need it be said, in that of Lionel. From the moment of his discovering that the girl whose voice haunted him was to be his sister's companion, and that he would be daily thrown into her society, he had taken to watching her closely, jealously almost, with the view of discovering whether or no she were worthy of his love and regard. Never would he succumb to mere physical attractions. His wife should be perfect morally rather than in form and feature, and, provided she were that, he would demand no greater dower, certain that in winning such a one he would acquire a priceless treasure, whose value would indeed be "far above rubies."

So far, he has seen nothing in her to lead him to regret his attraction towards her. She is bright and winsome, as a rule, but occasionally has fits of depression of which they can make nothing, but which he longs to comfort.

They must wait, Elsie says; when she knows them thoroughly she will trust them more.

Montague Gibson's visits are frequent, and it is noticeable that the fits of depression occur just before he is expected to arrive for a two or three days' stay, and that the cloud generally departs with him.

The bright, leafy days of June have taken the place of a somewhat sullen, wintry May, and The Cedars is looking its very loveliest, when Lionel proposes taking Elsie and Miss Winn for a continental trip, "just by way of a change to the monotony of existence," he says, but really with the intention of giving pleasure to Miss Winn, who has never been out of England. She enters into the scheme with an alacrity refreshing to witness in these days of ennui and blasé youth, and her spirits are at their highest on the morning that Lionel drives Elsie over to the neighbouring town of Croydon to spend a week with some friends there, intending himself to go on to town for the purpose of obtaining certain requisites for their journey, so that she has the prospect of passing several hours alone, Mrs. Lane, who is coming to play propriety during Elsie's absence, not being due till dinner-time.

She is affectionately bidden to "take care of herself" by Miss Dacre as the mail phaeton moves away; but the deepened tint of her cheek is due to the empressment of Lionel's "Au revoir!" and the glance that accompanies it.

Somewhat at a loss what to do with herself, she takes a book and shuts herself into the library for the luxury of an uninterrupted read, and for awhile is lost to sublimary matters in the magic pages of Georges Sand. From this state she is roused by a stealthy tapping at the French

window opening into a small conservatory, which in turn opens by a low flight of steps into the garden at the side of the house.

Starting up, she is annoyed, and rather alarmed, to see Montague Gibson standing thereat. With a peremptory gesture he bids her open it, which she accordingly does.

"You are alone?" he asks, looking round; and, going to the door of the room, he turns the key. "Do not be alarmed," he continues; "my time is short, and I would merely guard against interruption. No one is aware of my being here, so you need not fear for your reputation!" with sarcastic emphasis.

"Why have you come?" her voice faint with dread.

"To remind you of your obligations to me, and to call upon you for the one service it is in your power to render!"

"I am under no obligations to you! You have forfeited all claim upon me by your own act!"

"Pardon me. You forget my forbearance in allowing you to remain here. A word from me, and the sister of John Corry, the forger, would have been expelled with ignominy and contempt from the house of a woman so proud as Elsie Dacre. As it is, I have held my tongue, but assuredly not without a price for my silence, which I most certainly expect you to pay."

Her breath comes and goes in quick gasps, and a spot of vivid colour blazes on either cheek, as she notes the stern, merciless decision with which he speaks, and realizes that the moment has come in which to decide between happiness and duty.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Nothing very dreadful!" he answers, with an attempt at gaiety. "Anyone would conclude from your present manner that I was in the habit of requesting you to commit murder—or arson, at least! What I really want is a very simple thing: only to let me look at Miss Dacre's diamonds for a few moments. I know you have the key!"

"What can you require with them?"

"That is my business! You bring them down like a good girl. That is all I ask of you."

"I will not till you tell me more! Will you promise to let me take them back intact?" she asks, suspiciously.

"Well, no, I don't think I will make any rash promises. The truth is, and I may as well tell it first as last, I intend taking them to town with me to-day, but I swear you shall have them to replace in their usual receptacle before Elsie returns home!"

"Take them with you! Why? What purpose can you have?" she cries, aghast.

"Oh! can't you imagine a purpose? Perhaps I am intending to present her with a more expensive set!"

"More expensive set! Why, they are worth thousands!"

"What if they are? What are thousands to me?" he retorts, jeeringly. "Because I condescended to borrow a few paltry hundreds from you—hundreds you were only too willing to lend, remember—is that any reason why I should not spend thousands on such a woman as Elsie Dacre? Are you jealous of the superior beauty which commands what you never even dreamed of?"

"You are lying to me!" she exclaims in hot anger, stung by his sneering speech. "You have some evil design in connection with the jewels, and you shall not have them! You give her a more costly set! I know you too well to believe it! Far more likely that you intend substituting paste for the real stones, and enriching yourself at Miss Dacre's expense! Ha!" seeing a change in his face, which tells her her charge has struck home. "Ha! that was your purpose, was it? Know that it has failed, then, for I refuse to let you lay one finger on the gems!" and she turns determinedly away.

"Have you counted the cost of refusal?"

"I have!"

"I give you half an hour to decide. If at its expiration you persist in your present refusal, I shall immediately put the engine of the law into operation against your brother! I have one little item of news which may interest

you at this stage of the proceedings, and may have some weight in bringing you to your senses. I can lay my finger on him at a moment's notice, for accident has revealed his hiding-place!"

She turns white to the very lips, but there is no sign of yielding in her face.

"I am going down to the village now. When I return, in half an hour, I shall expect your final answer."

He goes out as he had come, and till the last echo of his footsteps dies away she stands as if turned into stone; then, throwing herself prone on the floor, gives way to an abandonment of grief not often witnessed.

But the minutes are flying, and the stroke of a clock chiming the hour warns her of their rapid flight, and rouses her to action. Rising, she gazes dreamily round at the chairs and tables with the pitiful, appealing cry, "What shall I do?" But there is "neither voice, nor any to answer."

Her first thought is of flight; but a second's reflection shows her how little it would avail. Her escape would but precipitate matters with regard to her brother John, who was so terribly in Gibson's power; and then of what use will life be to her—that life which has begun to re-assume such rosy hues since she came to reside at The Cedars?

That Lionel Dacre loves her, he is not careful to hide, and of late she has ventured to indulge herself in the sweet hope that all will come right some day; that the villain who insinuated himself into her early affections, and, after robbing her of her small patrimony, deserted her for a more wealthy connection—who had also led John into the extravagances from which he had attempted to extricate himself by a crime, suggested, as she was only too certain, by Gibson himself—would, in the increase of his own prosperity, be moved by pity for his victims, and deliver them from the thralldom in which he held them both by destroying the evidence of the forgery, from which no one had benefited, and of the existence of which he alone knew. But now she feels all such hope is vain. Happen what will, she must henceforth be a banished woman from the presence of him who makes her Eden; nothing can restore her old position, she tells herself, for nothing can balk Gibson of his revenge, and even if Lionel were willing to bear contumely for her sake, she will never consent to his doing so.

Had things gone well, she would herself have told him the whole sad story, and let him decide for himself. But with public disgrace he shall never be associated, if she can prevent it, and so she knows her dream is over, and with that knowledge comes a strong despair that blinds her to everything but her misery.

"Oh! if I might only die!" she moans, in anguish of spirit; and with the thought comes the impulse from the Evil One to put an end to all her sorrows by taking the life which belongs to her Creator.

As the evil prompting crosses her mind, her eyes fall upon a drawer in the library table, in which she has seen Lionel place a pistol, always kept loaded. This drawer is usually locked, and he keeps the key; but to-day, by some strange mischance, it is open. To take the weapon from its case, and place its cold muzzle against her throbbing temples, is but the work of an instant; the next would have seen her press its hair-trigger and fall dead by her own hand, but for the strong grasp that holds her to a manly breast with one arm, while the other sends the deadly weapon whirling through space.

Faint and giddy, she finds herself laid on a sofa, while stern tones demand from her "how she has dared to attempt such a deed?"

Looking up at the horror-struck countenance of Lionel Dacre, she whispers her penitence, and her thankfulness for the prevention of the act.

"I was mad," she says, with a piteous quiver of the lips which goes straight to his heart, "for, oh! I am so miserable!"

"Could you not have trusted me, darling?" he replies, reproachfully, with a marked pause

before the epithet, which makes it more conspicuous, and brings the crimson blood to cheek and brow."

"I know all," he whispers, looking into the bashful eyes, which go down before his, "and if you will give me the right to interfere, to protect you from this wretch—Will you, little one?"

"If you will be so good!" she stammers.

"It must be a husband's right, remember! You must promise to be my wife," and he stoops to kiss her, but she covers her face from him.

"You know not what you ask! I am not worthy!" she cries.

"Darling, I told you I knew all, and I am the best judge of your worthiness or otherwise. Say but the word, and Gibson shall be rendered incapable of harming you or your brother in the future."

For answer she removes the shielding fingers from her face, and lays her head upon his breast.

Twenty minutes later Montague Gibson, Esq., left The Cedars with a far less jaunty air than was habitual to him, and minus a certain document, penned by one John Corry, though purporting to be written and signed by his employer, which he, Montague Gibson, had been holding in terrorem over the said John Corry and his sister Winnifred; who shortly after exchanged her surname for that of Dacre, and who on her wedding day had another bride to bear her company and share the honours with her, one Elsie Dacre, whose eyes being opened to the baseness of one man had also been enlightened as to the virtues of another, whom she had accordingly promoted to the vacant place in her heart, and for whom the "golden days" he had deemed "beyond recalling" have returned. Happy mortal! Let us hope they will last!

AN OLD-FASHIONED GUINEA.—John Berke, an honest, industrious man, who lived in a landward parish not far from the "auld toon o' Aberdeen," had, by dint of industry and frugality, been able to give his only son a tolerably good education; and the young man, after being fully qualified, set off for London, where he soon got into a comfortable situation. After being properly settled, he, like a wise and grateful son, remitted to his father, from time to time, such small sums of money as he could spare from his salary. On one occasion he sent, by the hand of a friend, a guinea to his worthy father, who kept it like the apple of his eye, and would not by any means part with it, however hard he might be pressed. At this time gold was a great rarity in the "north country," and it was the custom of honest John to take his guinea to church with him every Sabbath-day and show it to his astonished neighbours as a "wonderfu' wonder," for which sight he was sure always to charge a penny from each individual who wished to see the "gowd guinea." But evil times came, and poor John was under the dire necessity of parting with his darling guinea. Sabbath came round, and John appeared in the churchyard as usual, but not in his wonted mood, for, alas! the precious coin was gone, and John felt as one bereaved of a friend who had long been dear to him. His neighbours looked around him as was their wont, wishing another sight of the guinea; but John told them, with a sorrowful heart and a sorrowful countenance, that "he could na' let them see't any mair, for he had been obligated to part w'it at last, an' a sair partin' it was to him!" His acquaintances, grieved and disappointed, both on account of John's hardships and of not having their own curiosity gratified, began to disperse, when John bethought him of a plan by which he might partly satisfy them, and likewise put a few pence into his pocket. "Come aback, lads!" cried John; "come aback! fat are ye a' gaen awa' for? Gin I canna let ye see the guinea itself for a penny, I'll let ye see the cloutie it was rowl in for a babble!"

THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN.

DIET.—I.

Diet may be considered as including all that part of the medical art which gives directions respecting food and drink, whether for the preservation of health or the cure of diseases. The diet is derived from the animal and vegetable kingdoms, from each of which a numberless variety of articles is procured. By the art of cookery, these are varied and combined in an infinite diversity of ways. It is sufficiently evident, by the structure of the teeth of man, of his stomach and bowels, and of all his organs subservient to digestion, that nature intended him to live on food of both kinds, vegetable and animal; and his limitation or abstinence from the one or the other is to be regulated solely by his convenience, and by the effect which he finds the different sorts of food to produce on his constitution. Animal food, being already, in a great measure, prepared and rendered similar to our blood, requires less exertion of the digestive powers; but it is found to be heating and stimulating, and hence it should never be used in inflammatory diseases, or made the principal diet in hot climates. Hence the northern nations are benefited by a considerable proportion of animal food, and the nations between the tropics live much on vegetables. There may be certain diseases and habits of body where it may be useful to take a great deal of animal food; but this should be considered as a necessary remedy, and be always under the direction and superintendence of the physician.

With respect to the solid or fluid nature of diet, we may remark that it is necessary to healthy digestion, not only to have a proper quantity of nutritive matter given to the stomach, but that there be a considerable bulk to give that organ a proper degree of distension: it is, therefore, necessary to add to soups and jellies some bread and other matter, to give them bulk.

OF THE DIET PROPER FOR DIFFERENT AGES.

The infant is provided by nature with milk for its nourishment, and farinaceous food may be properly conjoined with it. Little else is required till after the ninth or tenth month. Preparation may now be made for weaning, by giving the child, with his farinacea, a little animal food; as the juices of veal, or chicken, or lean beef. If the mother's milk evidently disagrees, and if the farinaceous food produces sourness and flatulence, the nurse must either be changed or a proportion of animal food, as gravy, or beef, must form a great part of the diet.

When the teeth have come in, children have a desire for other food, and are pleased to exert their powers on soft bread or a bit of meat; and this may be safely allowed to healthy children. While children are growing they have very frequent craving for food, and their stomachs have wonderful powers with respect to the quantity they are able to digest. The best proof of the quantity not being excessive, is the growth and healthy appearance of the child, his being lively and active at play soon after his meal, and his sleep being easy and uninterrupted. It may be plausibly urged as the dictate of nature, that we should not hinder children from eating as often as they choose, and at whatever periods. But as the mind and body must be brought under many restraints, if we wish for our offspring either good morals or a good constitution, we are inclined to recommend the early formation of regular habits in the period of taking food. If children are allowed to call for food and drink at every half hour when they are idle and fancy they want them, a very bad habit of indulgence will be induced; and as we can never be sure of the quantity and kind of the food which they take in, we may expect some morbid changes to take place in the digestive powers.

The regulation of the quality of children's

food is of the utmost importance. It is there, more than in quantity, that indulgent parents are apt to err. Sweetmeats, butter, pastry, high-seasoned dishes, and a great variety of them, ought not to be allowed to children. Their unsophisticated instincts do not desire these things; and if they were carefully kept from them, or resolutely denied them, we should consult at once their health and their character. Water, or occasionally small beer, should be their only drink. A habitual allowance of wine, except as a medicine, should be strictly forbidden; and much more, ardent spirits in every in every shape. Sauces and condiments should rarely be taken by children and young people.

At a more advanced period, as from eighteen to sixty, if the health be good, there is scarcely any rule to be given for diet, except to enjoy moderation. It has been plausibly enough inculcated, that we should confine ourselves at dinner to one dish only, whether it be of fish or other animal food. Undoubtedly, this is an excellent advice, conducive both to health and temperance, provided a person finds that his digestion goes on properly; but many experience that their stomachs agree best with some variety in the articles of their food, provided that the quantity taken be not too copious.

The drinks that may be used by adults are very numerous; some of them have their advantages, others their inconveniences. Water, for the healthy and active, is the drink prescribed by nature, and will never injure them; and it is happy for any individual to be quite independent of any other drink. But amid the great variety of other fluids which Providence has bestowed on the industry of man, there are many that agree well, both with the palate and the constitution, and which, when not taken in excess, or at improper times, contribute much to his health and comfort. Good small beer is an excellent drink: its slight bitterness assists digestion, it is cooling and antiseptic, and it, in some cases, tends to keep the bowels easy. By those who are troubled with flatulence it should be avoided. Ale and porter are considerably nutritious, and should be avoided by those who are inclined to become corpulent, and who take little exercise.

Wine is to be preferred to spirits, even when they are much diluted. Though there is much spirit in some wines, yet they contain extractive matter and mucilage, which hinders the spirit from producing the bad effects which it would do in the same quantity obtained by distillation. Though we cannot wish to encourage the use of ardent spirits, we admit that, with very many persons, they do no harm when taken in small quantity; but the compendious drunkenness which they produce, presents an overpowering temptation, to the vacant and unprincipled mind, to exceed the bounds of moderation; and when these are habitually passed, the character and health may be regarded as being in the most imminent danger. The different kinds of spirits, brandy, rum, gin, etc., agree in their general effects; brandy is best for weak stomachs, and gin for those who require the kidneys to be stimulated; but when those or the neighbouring organs are irritable, gin is better avoided.

In old age, the diet ought to be less heating than in the vigour of life. The quantity of animal food should be diminished, and the stomach should not be overloaded with a variety of high-seasoned food and dressed dishes. Though the relish for wine is less, it should be continued, in moderate quantity, for its cordial effects.

The diet in cold climates should be more generous and nourishing than in warm climates; spices and wines are proper; and in the bleak and mountainous parts of our Caledonian regions, the inhabitants use with impunity a quantity of ardent spirits which appears enormous to their southern visitors.

Srs, I admit your general rule,
That every poet is a fool;
But you yourself may serve to show it,
That every fool is not a poet.—ADDISON.

FACETIÆ.

THE "DIVIDED SKIRT."

A STORY OF DIVISION.

THEY were æsthetic, long engaged, and tender. She had blue china—he an old brass fender; Serene he sat on chairs of Chippendale—Souchong she sipped from Wedgewood pure and pale;

He quaffed Megethlin from an ancient horn, Owned by somethane ere Senlac's fatal morn— She loved her tables, spindle-legged and slim, Palissy ware with fishes on the rim, Venetian mirrors set in crystal frame, And in her garth the sunflower's daring flame Made life "too, too," and void of soil or shame. To Swinburne or Rosetti, Wilde or Payne, She listened as he read, and so was fain, From pure heart's trouble or dull drought of brain,

To wander listless down love's lengthening lane, Weep languid tears or in soft sighs complain. Parents and friends gave smiles of fondest greeting—

Congratulations not quite worth repeating; The wedding mora was fixed, and quaintest raiment

Ordered full soon, nor mention made of payment. When, lo! from stern Atlantic's seething surges, Fell Fashion, fraught with change, her chariot urges.

He cooler grew, nor read with eyes of yearning Rosetti's verse nor Swinburne's couplets burning.

The letters were not sent she wished and hoped, Nor posted, nay, nor even enveloped.

Breaches, alas! in life's fair fortress walls, Too oft we see, and e'en the thought appalls.

But why this breach we all with tears deplore? She wore divided skirts, and lo! his love was o'er.

J. J. R.

A YOUTH begged a belle to give him something he could wear next his heart. She sent him a red flannel chest protector.

"I TELL you gentlemen, that dog o' mine is an intelligent critter." "Possibly," muttered Fogg; "but you wouldn't think it, judging from the company he keeps."

"WELL," said a child, "if the hairs of our head are all numbered, the numbers must get awfully mixed up, for lots of women wear hair that grew on some one else's head."

AN Irish gentleman, hearing of a friend having a stone coffin made for himself, exclaimed, "Be me sowl, an' that's a good idea! Shure, an' a stone coffin 'ud last a man his lifetime."

"O, HENRY, aren't his eyes lovely?" she murmured, gazing into the face of a very homely poodle. "So liquid!" "I thought he'd lick-wid his tongue," replied Henry. The match was broken off; the dog gets all the petting now.

A SAILOR, calling upon a Liverpool goldsmith, asked him what might be the value of an ingot of gold as big as his arm. The shopkeeper, scenting a bargain, beckoned him into a back room and primed him with grog. He then asked to see the ingot. "Oh," said Jack, "I haven't got it yet, but I'm going to the diggings and should like to know the value of such a lump before I start." The goldsmith didn't ask him to call on his return from the diggings.

LATIN FOR THE "HOOSIERS."—Andrew Jackson was once making a stump speech out West in a small village. Just as he was concluding, Amos Kendall, who sat behind him, whispered, "Tip 'em a little Latin, general. They won't be contented without it." The man of the iron will instantly thought upon the few phrases he knew, and in a voice of thunder, wound up by saying, "E pluribus unum, sine qua non, ne plus ultra, multum in parvo!" The effect was tremendous, and the "Hoosiers" shouts could be heard for miles.

A QUESTION for a debating society—Does a gunsmith who sells a gun on credit charge it?

"WHY, are you alive yet, my dear old friend? I heard you were dead!" "A nice friend you are. You didn't even come to my funeral!"

"My mother is going to get a new piano," said one little girl to another the other day. "Oh, that's nothing," replied the other; "my mother's going to get a divorce!"

A WRITER quaintly remarks: "Avoid argument with ladies. In spinning yarns among silks and satins, a man will ever be worsted and twisted. And when a man is worsted and twisted, he may consider himself wound up."

"WELL, my dear, are you getting on nicely with your music?" "O, yes, mamma; last month, when I played four-hand pieces with my music-teacher, I was always a couple of bars behind. Now I am always at least three ahead."

It is the general impression that a tin-pan fastened to a strange dog's tail will afford the average boy about all the fun he wants; but a dog's teeth fastened in a boy's coat-tail has been known to give his companions just as much sport. Boys have no prejudices that are permitted to interfere with their enjoyment.

THE other morning an exceedingly considerate man awoke to find his neighbour's house on fire. Partially dressing himself he ran across the street, timidly rang the door bell, and patiently waited for some one to answer the summons. After a little, "the man of the house" appeared, and the timid man said: "I do not wish to create an unnecessary alarm, but your house is on fire."

A GREAT PRACTITIONER.—A loafer, recently arrested in Cincinnati, being questioned by the officer as to his vocation, replied: "Sir, I am a doctor. I have cured a pain in the head of navigation, and drawn teeth from the mouth of the Mississippi; I have anatomized the side of a mountain, blistered the foot of a hill, felt the pulse of an arm of the sea, plastered a cut on the hand of nature, and cured a felon on the finger of scorn."

Oh, when a fellow loves a girl,
And tries that girl to please,
And offers her his heart and hand
Upon his bended knees,
And vows she is his only love,
The idol of his life,
The only one in all the world
He'll ever call his wife!
Oh! don't he feel bewildered
When she lifts her eyes aloft,
And murmurs softly in his ear:
"Go home, young man—you're soft!"

IT THAWED OUT.—How beautiful is the exhibition of humanity in the young. A little boy found a poor half-frozen wasp in the garret and placed it upon a chair before the parlour fire to thaw out. Surely the angels must have looked down approvingly on such an act of kindness. When Sister Mary's beau called that evening he glanced at the chair, and, seating himself in it, murmured: "Ah, bless her heart! how thoughtful she is of my comfort!" Two minutes later there was as much noise and racket in that parlour as if it had been turned into a den of demons. The wasp had thawed out; that is the reason Mary isn't married yet.

RECENTLY, in walking along the main street in Brussels, an artist was much delighted at seeing one of his pictures, finely framed, in a dealer's window, especially as he was with a lady before whom he wished to appear in the best light possible. Calling the attention of the lady to the picture, he said: "Pardon me, but I have some curiosity to know how my pictures stand commercially," and with that the two entered the shop. "My good woman," said he to the keeper of it, "what is the price of the picture in the window there?" "That?" "Yes." "Three francs and a half." "What?" cried the artist, recoiling. The shopwoman, thinking the exclamation to be surprise at her high price, said, "Bless me, it includes the frame!"

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GUM ARABIC.—1. The addition of a little prussic-acid produces a brighter, but thinner, gilding. 2. It should be pure yellow, but it sometimes has a dull, earthy colour. 3. It is considered best to place the forefinger upon the head, and to move the legs with the second finger and thumb.

WALTER HAMMOND.—You will find it in the "Prometheus" of Æschylus.

BABY.—1. Watches were invented in the seventeenth century. 2. The first printed newspaper was published in England in the reign of Elizabeth. 3. Potatoes were brought us from America by Sir Francis Drake. Write again.

D. H. G.—Oranges are ordinarily brought from Nice, Genoa, the Isles of the Hyeres and the adjacent parts of the south of France, Portugal, the American Islands, and sometimes China and the coasts of India. Lemons come principally from Spain and Portugal. Limes are by some deemed a species of lemon, by others not.

ADA P.—Blue should suit your complexion; but in future don't spell it "blew," there's a dear girl!

E. E. M. Fox.—It is possible you may get what you want on application to the secretary of the Foundling Hospital, or find a parentless child thrown upon the parish for support.

I. S. C. S.—The following quotation from Edward Walford's memoir of Lord Beaconsfield will give you the information you require: "His political creed, judging from his own manifesto, must be owned to have been somewhat enigmatical. In his hatred of the Whigs he was equally disposed to accept the aid of both extremes—the Tories on the one side, and the Radicals on the other; and probably it would not be unjust or inaccurate to say that he came forward as a Tory-Radical."

I. A. B.—If the acknowledgment took the form of an I. O. U., it did not require to be stamped.

MRS. A. ARCHER.—We are pleased to hear yourself and friends find the stories interesting. We are afraid, unless you can tell us the title of the story or the number of the paper in which it appeared, we shall be unable to give you the name of the author, as your description of the illustration was too vague.

INQUISITIVE.—1. About the average. 2. As many as he requires, observing the rule of always rising directly he wakes.

A. Z. H.—We have no opening at present.

PISCES.—We are sorry we are unable to give you the information.

INCUBENT.—You are probably suffering from a form of varicose veins, which, in many cases, arise from debility.

M. L.—Smearing the finger tips with a little bitter substance, such as aloes, would probably cure you of biting your nails. 2. Yes; we think the writing might be better for a "big girl."

MARIAN B. kindly sends us a recipe for staining wood, which we subjoin for the benefit of our readers: Dissolve two ounces of sulphate of iron in one gallon of boiling water, and, while hot, brush the wood all over. Take two and a half pounds of fustic, and boil for half an hour in two gallons of water, and when the first preparation is perfectly dry, apply this while it is still hot. When this application, which will be of a greenish hue, has been allowed to remain on for twenty-four hours, the following should be used: one pound salt of tartar (subcarbonate of potash) in one gallon of water. Apply this, when cold, with a brush, and varnish when dry.

CATHOLIC.—1. No; the Druids were divided into three classes: the bardic, priests, and law-givers (or judges). To distinguish them from the people they wore long beards, long white robes, carried a wand, and wore a mystic symbol round their necks, called "the Druid's egg." 2. The term "Druid" is supposed to be derived from the Greek "Drus," meaning "oak" to which they were superstitiously attached.

MADLINE.—The 25th of February, 1851.

HISTORIAN.—July, 1588, was the date in which the Armada arrived in the British Channel.

HUGO.—Two drachms of diluted sulphuric acid, one drachm of tincture of myrrh, and four ounces of spring water, mixed, will whiten the nails. Previously cleanse them with white soap, and dip them in the mixture.

LUCY.—We are sorry you allow such a small defect to prey on your mind. See answer to "M. L." Orthography correct.

JACKY.—"Crane" was a term used in falconry, and meant a string to which hawks were fastened during their first lessons.

ANTHABEL.—Only now found in the environs of Damiette and on the banks of Lake Minzaleh.

CHESMAN.—The red double pink signifies "pure and ardent love."

STUDENT.—Probably the cause of your invariably falling asleep when studying is that you choose wrong hours—either directly after a meal or at the end of the day's work, when the body and mind are exhausted.

LIMBERICK.—The best remedy would be to purchase a fillet.

FOULTRY.—The art of hatching birds by artificial means was perfected in 1802.

EMIL.—January 3rd, 1865, fell on a Friday.

ROSE-COLOURED.—"Monomania" signifies a madness upon one point. It is a great pity you were ignorant of the meaning of the word, as you might have been able to give a suitable answer that would have, vulgarly speaking, "shut him up" for the rest of the journey.

MARY.—We strongly advise you to get a testimonial before you leave.

HOUSEWIFE.—From May to the end of January is the time in which plums is in season.

LOVE-JOHN.—Cacus, in heathen mythology, was represented as a three-headed monster, and as vomiting fire. He was a famous robber, and son of Vulcan and Medusa. It is said the avenues of the cave in which he lived were covered with human bones.

ONE INTERESTED IN ANIMALS.—We are not astonished, for the auroch, a species of wild bull, is now extinct. You would have found a short description in the "Dictionary of General Knowledge," by George Crabb, A.M.

CELLABEE.—Perry is a fermented wine made from pears.

J. THOMAS.—1. Lulea is a port in Sweden, on the shore of the Gulf of Bothnia. 2. About 2000 inhabitants.

ONE WHO WISHES TO EDUCATE A FLEA.—1. Someone tells us it is impossible to educate a flea, and that all the antics and tricks so ingeniously exhibited are merely the frantic attempts of it to escape. Then you would have as much power over a flea as any of the so-called trainers. 2. M. Bertolotto, who attained wonderful success as the trainer and exhibitor of these minute insects, allowed them to feed twice each day upon his arm.

LURLINE.—From your description, we should say the dog was a Pomeranian.

BATHER.—Yes: Turkish baths are beneficial to persons undergoing any amount of bodily exertion, or who reside in a warm climate. They should not be indulged in too frequently, as they not only remove the matter already secreted, but also promote fresh secretions, which deprives the blood of nutrient material and greatly tries the strength of the individual.

ART STUDENT.—If you had asked a week ago, we should have said yes; but we have just seen a cast from a figure in the Museum which makes us hesitate.

THRIFTY SOUL.—You would find pine-apple water a pleasant beverage. Take a foreign pine, and, after peeling and cutting it in slices, beat to pulp in a mortar. Put in a basin, and pour on it a pint of boiling syrup, flavoured with lemon. Cover well, and put it aside for a couple of hours, filter through a jelly-bag, and add a couple of spring water.

ONLY A YOUTH.—It is found by careful calculation, based upon observations registered by the Babylonians, that the moon in those ancient times must have occupied several more days in completing her revolutions than she now does. Hence it is concluded that this faithful satellite is drawing nearer to the earth, and should her progress remain unchecked, consequently to destruction. 2. The moon has no inhabitants. Eternal winter reigns over its rocky, sterile, desolate domain.

S. TURON.—The consort of Richard II., Queen Ann, is said to have been the first woman in England who rode on a side-saddle. Previous to that time, it was the custom for women to ride astride.

INVESTIGATOR.—The civil day of the Jews began at sunrise, and their sacred day at sunset. You have overlooked that fact.

P. E. B.—Yes. It is stated that a child of Maria Theresa, the wife of Louis XIV., was born black, in consequence of a fright the Queen received from the sudden and unexpected appearance of a little black page, who stumbled over her train. The black child was a girl, who lived, and grew up to womanhood, but was not allowed to leave the convent in which she was educated, and in which she took the veil. Up to the time of the Great Revolution her portrait used to be shown in this convent, that of Moret, near Fontainebleau.

SCRIBBLER.—A nice letter, prettily worded. Many thanks for your good wishes for the success of THE LONDON READER. Writing is excellent.

J. H. B.—The marriage would be void.

LUCY LOOKERS.—"We was going" is decidedly incorrect.

COUNTRY WENCH.—We should think you would have no difficulty in getting a situation. London ladies prefer country servants. 2. At a servant's registry office.

LAUDABLE.—St. Martin's Lane.

RITZ.—We regret it is out of our power to comply with your request.

A. S. S.—The pronunciation of Scriptural names you will find at the end of Webster's dictionary.

EDIE.—If you thoroughly understood shorthand, your master would most probably give you better remuneration.

APE.—1. Darwin. 2. Yes; we believe it will shortly be published in America.

LUKE.—Your MSS. would have all due attention.

O. P. G.—We are convinced it is possible to master the rudiments of botany from "The Popular Educator."

JOHN BROWN.—Yes; the man will be compelled to do so.

OLD SALT.—You would have to serve an apprenticeship.

GOOSE.—The word "Selah," occurring so frequently in the Psalms, is supposed to have been a musical note.

MELVILLE.—Since the young lady has given you so much encouragement, we think you might safely seek an introduction to her parents.

DISTRESSED.—We should not care to give advice in such a complicated matter; your description was not very intelligible. The best way out of the difficulty would be to consult a solicitor.

KATIE WEST.—The poem appeared in the "Court Magazine" for 1857.

M. CAVENDISH.—We are pleased to give you the recipe of "nun's cake": Beat eight ounces of fresh butter to a cream, and add half a pound of flour, a little grated nutmeg, eight ounces of powdered sugar, the well-beaten yolks of four eggs, with a table-spoonful of cold water. Work this all together for some minutes, and pour into a buttered dish. Bake in a moderately hot oven.

D. E.—The sensation of something creeping over the flesh when nothing of the kind really exists, is a nervous one, and is not uncommon.

SARAH.—1. In next week's issue. 2. Impossible. 3. Already answered more than once.

A SUFFERER.—1. Select spots where the scarf-skin is thinnest, to facilitate the introduction of the medicine, and rub it well into the pores. 2. We go to press in advance of the date each number bears—hence the delay.

A GRATEFUL MOTHER.—Cotton is warmer than linen because it is a better radiator and a worse conductor of heat. Select a material that is soft and pliable for immediate contact with the skin of your child.

PAUL PAT.—A flash of lightning, in August, 1876, did all that you mention. It penetrated the theatre at Venice during a performance, killed several people, melted the gold case of a lady's watch, and some jewels in the ears of another lady, split some diamonds, and put out all the lights.

IN THE STRAND.—The Savoy Palace was built in 1245, converted into an hospital in 1594, and burnt down on March 2nd, 1776.

ROD AND LINE.—The ruff is a fish resembling the perch, the average length of which is from six to seven inches.

C. C.—The horse is hide-bound. Consult a "vet." Put it out to graze.

H.—Highflyer was never beaten. You have confounded this horse with another of the same name which belonged to the same owner, Lord Bellinghroke. Highflyer was foaled in 1774.

TOPO.—No. The Republic of Andorra (Spanish) had an independent government in the time of Charlemagne.

W. H.—He was a son of the Marquis of Hartington.

A CORNISH WOMAN.—Opodeldoc is made by dissolving soap in alcohol, with the addition of camphor and volatile oils.

PHILL GARLICK.—Roselite is a very rare mineral—twin crystals, rose-coloured.

READER.—The vascular system is that part of the animal economy relating to blood-vessels.

UNCERTAINTY.—The Alexandra Park was first opened on August 6th, 1870.

W. G. KOPPEL.—The first Cunard steamer was built at Glasgow, in 1840, and named the "Britannia."

RICHARD GRAY.—The artist, Kenny Meadows, died some years since. He was a self-taught man, and somewhat eccentric in his manners and opinions.

V. S. B.—Douglas Jerrold's comedy "Time Works Wonders" was first produced at the Haymarket Theatre, and was a great success. The author was present in a private box, and was very proud of his triumph.

AN ADMIRER.—It was, we believe, Charles Dickens, the present editor of "Household Words," who passed a portion of his life in China.

S. M. GRAY.—You remind us of the polite Scotch shoemaker who, measuring the foot of his customer, said: "Weel, sir, I will not say that you have either a large foot or a clumsy foot; but this I may say, it will tak a dale of leather to cover it." We accept the hint in the spirit in which it is given—good-naturedly. The fact is, you are not behind the scenes. The stories appeared in our pages some weeks before they re-appeared in "Bow Bells."

L. D.—Fielding, the great novelist, was buried in the English cemetery at Lisbon.

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